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Legislative Audit Division

State of Montana

Report to the Legislature

June 2004

Performance Audit

Montana Highway Patrol

Highway Patrol Division
Department of Justice

The report contains recommendations to help improve the Montana Highway Patrol's capability to efficiently and effectively conduct traffic enforcement and patrol operations including:

- **Increasing patrol time by identifying alternatives for low priority activities.**
- **Increasing officer supervision and patrol by reducing sergeant administrative duties.**
- **Redefining data collection requirements, methodologies, and analyses.**
- **Examining officer position descriptions and recruit qualifications.**

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Members of the performance audit staff hold degrees in disciplines appropriate to the audit process. Areas of expertise include business and public administration, statistics, economics, political science, criminal justice, computer science, education, and law.

Performance audits are performed at the request of the Legislative Audit Committee, which is a bicameral and bipartisan standing committee of the Montana Legislature. The committee consists of six members of the Senate and six members of the House of Representatives.

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The Legislative Audit Committee
Of the Montana State Legislature:

This is our performance audit of the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), a division of the Department of Justice. The MHP was established in 1935 and is the largest law enforcement agency in the state. The Patrol is responsible for enforcing the highway traffic and motor vehicles laws of Montana.

This report provides information to the legislature regarding MHP operations. The results of our audit work indicate MHP is meeting the general intent of the law. We make recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operations by prioritizing activities, analyzing operational effectiveness, increasing supervision, and addressing officer pay and retention issues. A response from the department is included at the end of the report.

We wish to express our appreciation to all MHP uniformed officers, civilians, and command, as well as sheriff's office and municipal law enforcement personnel, for their cooperation and assistance during the audit.

Respectfully submitted,

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Legislative Audit Division

Performance Audit

Montana Highway Patrol

Highway Patrol Division
Department of Justice

Members of the audit staff involved in this audit were Lisa Blanford, Andrew Geiger, Kent Rice, and Mike Wingard.

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Field Services Bureau, Highway Patrol Division

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Management Services Bureau, Highway Patrol Division

Introduction

The Legislative Audit Division conducted a performance audit of the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP). Our planning and fieldwork focused on MHP's ability to meet statutory mandates relative to public safety. In addition, we examined the organization's overall efficiency and effectiveness in achieving public safety responsibilities with existing resources.

MHP command stated the major challenge facing the agency was the issue of officer pay and retention. Additionally, MHP officials indicated the number of patrol officers had not changed since 1972 despite increases in Montana population, number of vehicles, and the number of miles driven on Montana highways. We also examined these MHP concerns.

Background

In response to a highway fatality rate that led the nation, the MHP was established in 1935. At present, the MHP is the largest law enforcement agency in the state, with a current authorized strength of 206 uniformed personnel. MHP is responsible for enforcing Montana's traffic-related laws. Offenders may be issued a citation (ticket), as well as be arrested and jailed depending upon the violation. Traffic and motor vehicle regulation includes crash investigation and reporting. Annually, patrol officers drive more than 5.5 million miles, responding to over 70,000 calls for service and issue more than 100,000 warnings and 85,000 citations. During calendar year 2003, MHP officers investigated over 11,000 crashes.

MHP is organized into three bureaus: Field Forces, Field Services, and Management Services. There are a total of 274.55 authorized FTE for MHP operations. MHP personnel include officers, radio technicians, dispatchers, commercial vehicle inspectors, and administrative resources. The Field Forces Bureau, administered by a lieutenant colonel, manages MHP's seven districts, each commanded by a captain. Districts encompass several counties and are subdivided into detachments typically including two to three counties. The number of detachments in a district varies from three to five. There are a total of 25 detachments located across the state. Sergeants administer detachment activities, including supervision of

5-10 patrol officers assigned to various duty stations within the detachment area. A map on page 5 shows districts, and detachment office locations.

The Field Services Bureau is administered by a captain and includes five sections including: communications, fleet and supply, motor vehicle inspection, training and research, and the executive protection program for the Governor.

The third bureau, Management Services, is administered by a civilian and is responsible for all fiscal, personnel, and records management for the division. MHP is primarily funded primarily by Highways State Special Revenue funds. The source of this fund is fuel taxes and gross vehicle weight fees. The MHP budget uses approximately 11.2 percent of Highways State Special Revenue Account.

MHP Patrol and Non-Patrol Activities

The primary day-to-day activity of an MHP officer is patrol of the Montana highway system. In addition to patrolling Montana's road system, MHP officers are involved in a variety of other duties and responsibilities ranging from inspection of commercial wreckers to public education. Officers also coordinate their activities with other law enforcement agencies by providing mutual aid, both when requested during emergency circumstances and through planned special event activities. Table 4 on page 12 lists MHP patrol and non-patrol activities for calendar years 2000 through 2003.

An officer can typically determine whether to patrol or conduct non-patrol activity. Patrol routes are also often at the officer's discretion and they have the discretion on whether to write a warning versus citation for most offenses. Sergeants supervise through detachment team meetings, telephone and radio contact, and in many cases email. Additionally, officers complete daily activity reports specifying activities completed and associated timeframes. Information from these reports is reviewed by the detachment sergeant. Sergeants also review citations issued by officers to evaluate statutory and policy compliance, as well as officer consistency. By policy, sergeants are also required to conduct

quarterly rides with each officer to evaluate patrol performance and interaction with the public.

Technology Improvements

MHP is in the midst of a significant upgrade of reporting and tracking systems used for command and control, patrol officer activity reporting, and crash investigation reporting. One of the most significant changes involves installation of mobile data terminals (MDTs), which are specialized laptop computers attached to the dashboard of patrol vehicles. MDT units have been installed in approximately 1/3rd of MHP's patrol vehicles, primarily in urban areas. MDT units allow officers direct access to state and federal data systems, provides email communication capability, and the terminals can be used to prepare daily as well as crash investigation reports. The purchase of more MDT units and continued installation will be spread over the next several years.

In addition to in-car technological changes, the MHP is centralizing statewide dispatch activity in Helena. Centralization was possible as a result of conversion to a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. MHP estimates full implementation by July 2004. The CAD system includes capability to incorporate global positioning system patrol vehicle tracking and an activity tracking capability know as the Records Management System. Implementation of this system is estimated for the end of calendar year 2004.

Improving Resource Utilization

In Chapter III we review the statutory language associated with MHP, it's mission, and present our analysis of MHP operations. To assess the potential for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the MHP, we also reviewed the types of activities conducted by patrol officers. We conclude MHP efficiency and effectiveness could be enhanced through priority establishment, increased supervision of personnel, and improved management information collection and analysis. These areas are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Patrol Officer Priorities

One concern initially described by MHP command was a reduction of on-the-road patrol capability due to assumption, over the years, of additional officer responsibilities. MHP management has established

an organizational goal of 50 percent for officer patrol time. In other words, officers should spend at least half their on-duty time on traffic patrol. For calendar year 2003, the MHP reported patrol rate is 43 percent.

We reviewed the daily log for 32 officers for three non-consecutive months in 2002 and 2003 and compiled information on time spent on specific activities. Based on our review, we concluded patrol activity, measured in terms of enforcement is impacted by the wide range of obligations encountered day-to-day by officers.

Over the years, MHP has assumed responsibilities in addition to those directly related to traffic enforcement. Many of these responsibilities relate to a broad range of public service activities such as school safety education talks, support of local law enforcement, and various types of inspections. We believe MHP officers should focus resources on high-risk, non-discretionary and discretionary activities. To accomplish this, it is important for MHP command to identify alternatives for completing low-risk activities such as investigation of non-injury, low-dollar vehicle crashes, ATV and VIN inspections, etc. By focusing on high-risk activities, the amount of time officers spend on traffic patrol should increase. The alternatives for low-risk activities include:

- Reducing the required activity
- Concentrating or scheduling activities to reduce the total time expended by officers
- Contracting or using other resources for completion of the activity, and/or charging a fee

Patrol Officer Activity Reporting

Designed in the early 1980's, the MHP's Monthly Activity Reporting System is a DOS-based computer system used to collect and report officer activities. Based on our review of activity reporting and how data is coded and utilized, we determined the current process should be improved to better assess MHP operations. The three primary deficiencies include:

- Inconsistent activity coding by officers

- Problematic patrol time definitions
- Activity information is not used by management to formally analyze MHP activities or to allocate personnel resources

In Chapter II, we discuss new technology acquisitions currently underway within MHP. With the planned technological upgrade, we believe the time is right to evaluate operational requirements and collect the type of information useful to supervisors and management. We also believe with modification, the current annual report issued by MHP could provide an appropriate venue for reporting operational effectiveness.

Patrol Officer Supervision

During our review of field operations, we found many sergeants spend the majority of their time performing administrative duties rather than spending time on the road for patrol and direct officer supervision. We noted examples of sergeants recording over 90 percent of available time to non-patrol activities each month. According to sergeants we interviewed, the current supervision approach is paperwork intensive and the amount and type of personal guidance to officers concerning patrol versus non-patrol priorities is minimal. As a result, there are inconsistencies in officer patrol activities in area such as bond collection procedures, use of stationary radar, radio communications, and determinations of minimal speeds for making stops and issuing tickets or warnings.

While none of the noted inconsistencies by themselves suggest systemic concerns with the quality of MHP field operations, they do infer a lack of comprehensive supervisory assurance all officers comply with established MHP policy and procedure. Historically, states including Montana increased the number of officers and highway patrol presence in response to increases in crashes and fatality rates. We believe the MHP presence on Montana's roadways can be increased by diverting sergeant time from office administration and paperwork supervision to patrol and on-the-road supervision. This could be accomplished by taking advantage of new technologies and internal re-prioritization of administrative duties.

We recommend MHP implement a pilot project to evaluate the recommendation for a more patrol-oriented approach to supervision. Following the pilot project, MHP should assess administrative requirements to determine what happened to field operations when administrative requirements were delayed or not accomplished at all. Similar to the alternatives listed in the patrol priority section, we believe the list of options to sergeants being "desk bound", should include utilizing contracts and retired law enforcement officers, and/or establishing criteria for justification for part-time administrative support staff to assume some sergeant tasks.

Review of MHP Personnel Issues

As noted in the introduction, MHP command identified officer pay and retention as the largest challenge facing the agency. In Chapter IV we present information that shows MHP officer salary is lower than law enforcement personnel in selected Montana counties and there is an increase in the percentage of officer turnover in the past five years. This issue is an area for legislative consideration.

MHP Officer Pay Is Not Competitive With Applicable External Markets

On page 43, (Table 6) we show the starting hourly salaries for deputy sheriffs in selected Montana counties and compare them with an MHP officer's starting salary. The information shows, depending on location, an MHP officer who decides to switch to a county agency can make from $1.90 to $5.39 more per hour to start. While not all county law enforcement agencies in Montana pay the salaries listed, we noted typically MHP is not competing with the lower population counties which normally have lower salaries. In addition, our examination shows the majority of MHP turnover occurred from officers located in the eight counties identified in the table.

Retention: Why MHP Officers Are Leaving The Patrol

MHP command conducts employee exit interviews with all officers who leave the agency. Figure 7 on page 47 shows officer reasons for leaving MHP over the past ten years. Of the 163 officers who left, 55 or 33.7 percent left MHP for pay increases with local law enforcement agencies.

Review of the termination dates revealed thirty-five officers or 43 percent left during the last five years. This trend appears to show accelerating turnover. If the trend continues, MHP would see more

than 50 percent of their turnover consisting of officers leaving for local law enforcement agencies within the next four to five years.

Summary And Conclusion

MHP believes officer pay should be comparable with Montana's municipal and county law enforcement agencies. The data compiled indicates MHP is losing officers to the agencies which pay higher salaries. We also found recruitment of law enforcement personnel has become more competitive in the last decade. Municipal and county agency officials indicated it is becoming more difficult to recruit qualified applicants, and these local law enforcement agencies currently have the advantage of a more competitive compensation package than MHP. While the number of qualified applicants has decreased, municipal and county law enforcement agencies cite the need for increasing skills and professionalism in their personnel. These officials support a need to increase initial officer qualifications given the demands of the profession. We believe the MHP should accurately reflect the increasing complexity of officer duties in the current job description, review and revise the recruit qualification criteria, and if necessary request a classification review of the officer position.

Chapter I - Introduction

Introduction

At the request of the Legislative Audit Committee, the Legislative Audit Division conducted a performance audit of the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), a division of the Department of Justice. Our planning and fieldwork focused on MHP's ability to meet statutory mandates relative to public safety. In addition, we examined the organization's overall efficiency and effectiveness in achieving public safety responsibilities with existing resources. MHP command stated the major challenge facing the agency is the issue of officer pay and retention. Additionally, MHP officials indicated the number of patrol officers had not changed since 1972 despite increases in Montana population, number of vehicles, and the number of miles driven on Montana highways.

Audit Objectives

We developed four audit objectives:

- Provide the Montana Legislature information about patrol activities allowing for review of the current and future role of the MHP.
- Compare current operational activities to legislative intent, statutory roles and responsibilities, and the mission of the MHP.
- Assess operational efficiency and effectiveness by examining supervision, staffing patterns and shift assignment, area coverage, training, patrol versus non-patrol activities, and equipment utility/availability.
- Examine MHP management and legislative concerns regarding officer pay and retention.

Scope & Methodologies (Appendix A)

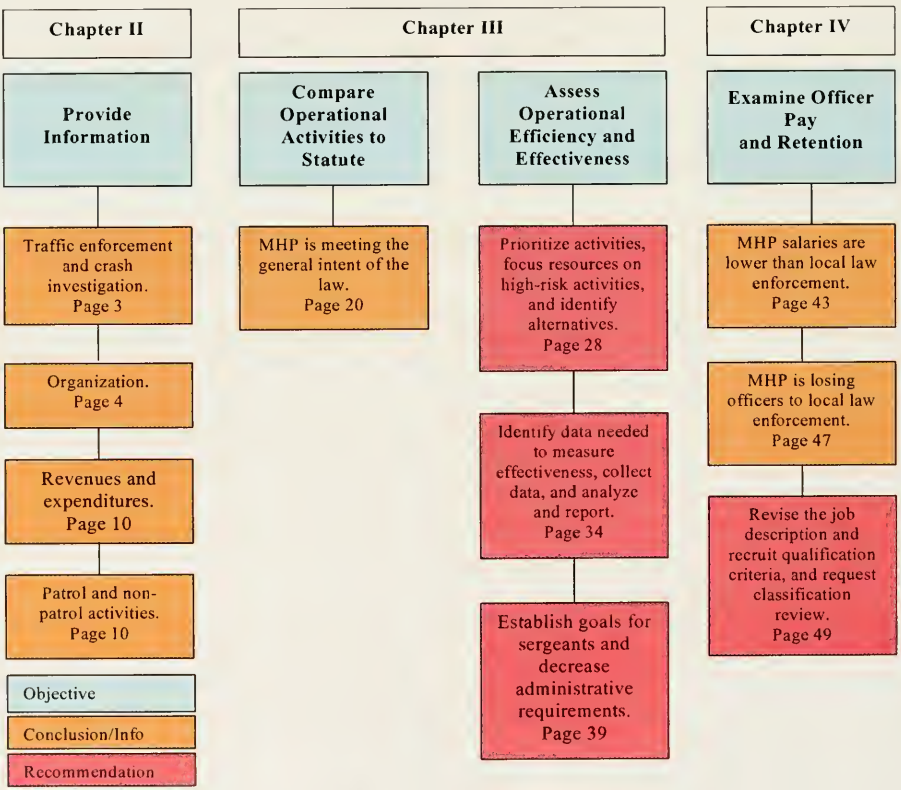
The discussion of our audit scope and methodologies is located in Appendix A. Additionally Appendix A includes data limitations information and a section on three topics warranting consideration by the Legislative Audit Committee for future performance audit.

Compliance

We examined compliance with the public safety components of Title 44, Chapter 1, Parts 1, 2, 3, 10, and 11, MCA. We found MHP was generally in compliance with the requirements of these laws. General audit findings and conclusions related to these laws are included in Chapter III. Figure 1 presents an overview of the report's organization by describing the remaining three chapter's objective, contents, and recommendations.

Figure 1

Report Organization Overview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Establish goals for sergeants and decrease administrative requirements. Page 39
Chapter IV
Examine Officer Pay and Retention
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Revise the job description and recruit qualification criteria, and request classification review. Page 49
Objective
Conclusion/Info
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Chapter II - Background

Introduction

In response to a highway fatality rate that led the nation, the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) was established in 1935. Twenty-four officers were selected for statewide patrol responsibilities. In 1972 with fatalities reaching an all-time high of 395, the Montana Legislature expanded the uniformed force to 220 officers. MHP is the largest law enforcement agency in the state, with a current authorized strength of 206 uniformed officers.

The MHP is a division of the Department of Justice responsible for enforcing highway traffic and motor vehicle laws of Montana. MHP is commanded by a colonel, appointed by the Montana Attorney General. Of the 206 uniformed positions, approximately 165 are patrol officers assigned to locations across the state, and the remaining positions include Helena central office personnel and field supervisors (captains and sergeants). Annually, patrol officers drive more than 5.5 million miles, responding to over 70,000 calls for service and issuing more than 100,000 warnings and 85,000 citations.

Background

Section 61-1-305, MCA, defines a highway patrol officer to mean state officers authorized to direct or regulate traffic or to make arrests for violations of traffic regulations. The law defines patrol officers as police officers for offenses occurring on highways, rest areas, state highway property, or offenses involving the use of motor vehicles (or registration), and for serving warrants associated with violations of highway and motor vehicle laws. In Chapter III we offer additional discussion of MHP's statutory obligations.

Primary Responsibility is Traffic Law Enforcement

MHP is responsible for enforcing Montana's traffic-related laws. Enforcement means apprehending violators of traffic and motor vehicle regulations. Offenders may be issued a citation (ticket) known as a notice to appear in court, as well as be arrested and jailed depending on the violation. Traffic and motor vehicle regulation includes traffic crash investigation and reporting. During calendar year 2003, MHP officers investigated over 11,000 crashes, which represents half of the total reported crashes occurring in Montana.

Mainly due to jurisdiction, Sheriff's departments and municipal police investigate the remainder. The following table shows the types of crashes investigated by the seven MHP districts:

Table 1

District Crash Investigation
(Calendar year 2003)

Type	Missoula	Great Falls	Butte	Billings	Glendive	Kalispell	Belgrade	Total
Damage	1581	830	1403	1046	426	1391	1078	7755
Injury	543	382	494	387	270	693	311	3080
Fatal	29	34	25	31	24	35	27	205
Total	2153	1246	1922	1464	720	2119	1416	11040

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP records.

MHP Organization

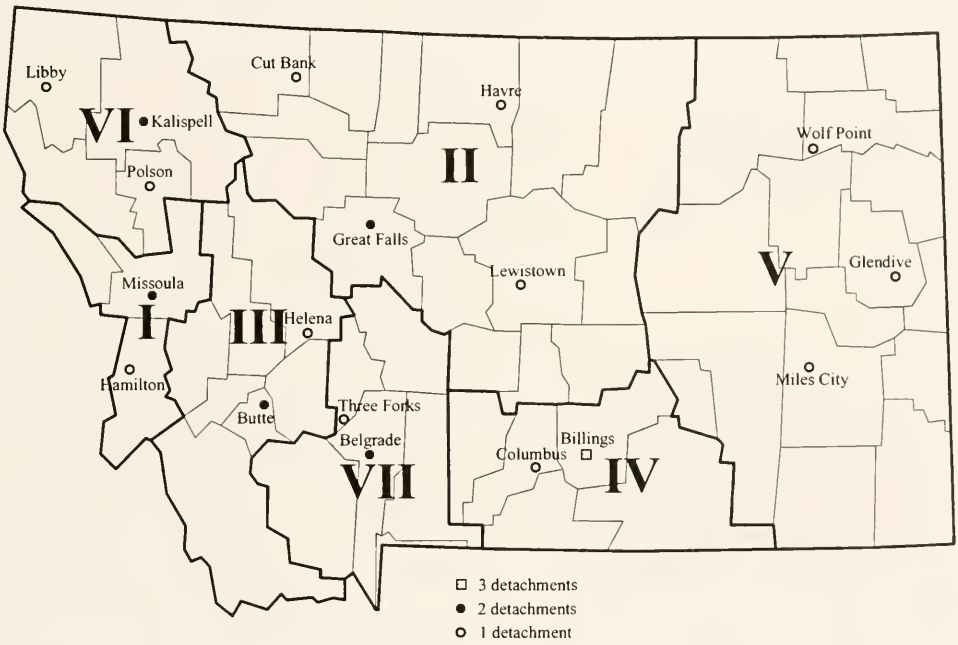
MHP is organized into three bureaus: Field Forces, Field Services, and Management Services. There are a total of 274.55 authorized FTE for MHP operations. MHP personnel include officers, radio technicians, dispatchers, truck inspectors, and administrative resources.

Field Forces

The Field Forces Bureau, administered by a lieutenant colonel, manages MHP's seven districts, each commanded by a captain. Captains are responsible for the activities of the sergeants and officers assigned to their district. District offices are located in Belgrade, Billings, Butte, Glendive, Great Falls, Kalispell and Missoula. Districts encompass several counties and are subdivided into detachments with designated areas of responsibility typically including two to three counties. The number of detachments in a district varies from three to five. There are 25 total detachments located across the state. Sergeants administer detachment activities, including supervision of five to ten patrol officers assigned to cover the detachment area of responsibility. The following map identifies the seven MHP districts and shows detachment office locations.

Figure 2

MHP District Boundaries and Detachment Office Locations



Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP records.

Section 44-1-303(4), MCA, places responsibility with the MHP Colonel to station patrol officers in localities for the enforcement of the traffic laws of the state. According to MHP command, the location of the duty station of individual patrol officers is based on historical political influences, service requirements of the area, and within limitations, the preferences of the officers. For example, the Glendive District (V):

- Encompasses the entire east end of the state (16 counties).

- Includes three detachment offices: Miles City, Glendive, and Wolf Point.
- Has officer duty stations ranging from Plentywood in the north to Broadus in the south (approximately 300 road miles) to Hysham on the west side of the district and Culbertson on the east side of the district (approximately 250 road miles).

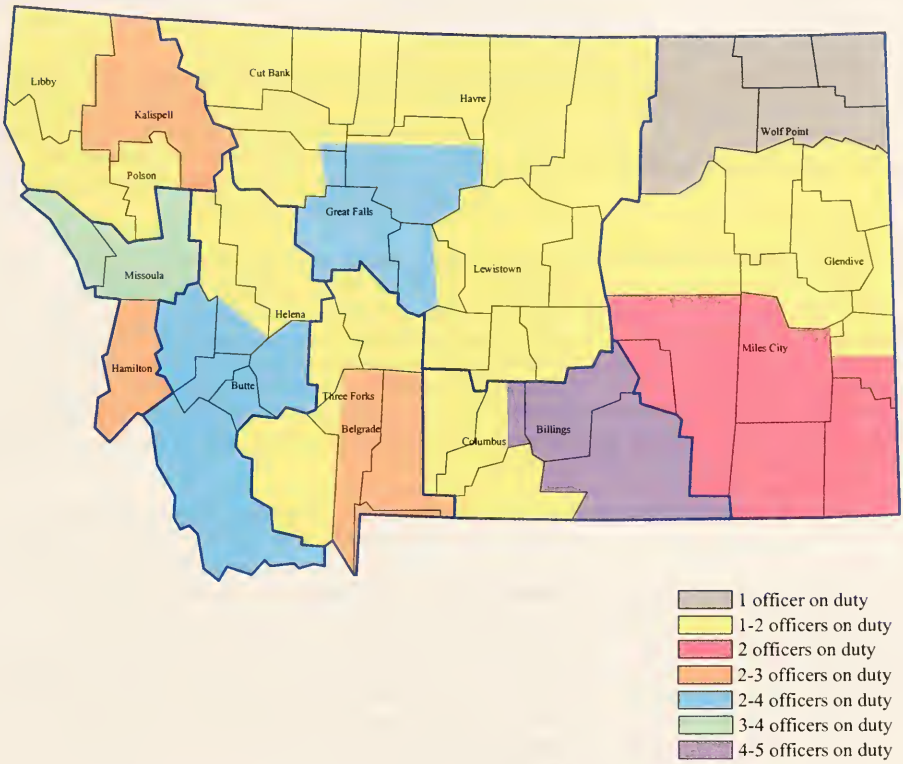
Patrol Coverage

Officer patrol schedules and areas of patrol coverage are determined by detachment sergeants. During most of 2003, the officer work schedule was based on an eight-hour work period and individual districts established their own shift rotation frequency (daily, weekly, or monthly). Effective December 2003, MHP began using a rotating shift concept based on officers working four consecutive 10-hour days. Most officers start with a night shift frequently starting at 4:00 pm or later, rotating each day to an earlier shift, and concluding on the fourth day with a shift starting at 7:00 am. According to MHP command, officer presence on Montana highways primarily focuses on the hours between 7:00 am and 3:00 am (21 hours). Due to sick leave, vacation, military leave, and training, there are seldom more than two MHP officers on duty (excluding sergeants and captains) in a detachment area of responsibility during any given period of time. The most extensive coverage state-wide is scheduled for Friday and Saturday evenings. The following map reflects MHP patrol coverage for 5:00 pm during a typical day.

Figure 3

MHP Officer Typical Day Coverage (5:00 pm)

(3/20/04 to 4/16/04)



Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP records.

As Figure 3 illustrates, the number of actual on-duty MHP officers at a given time is relatively low. This can increase response times to calls for service. For example, during our ride-along with an officer stationed in Wolf Point, the officer had to respond to an auto crash near the Canadian border. It was nearly a 100-mile drive to the crash scene. Although in some cases off-duty officers in closer locations

(Glasgow) may be able to respond, it is dependent on their availability and priority of the call for service. Examples such as this one are common throughout the state.

Field Services

The Field Services Bureau, administered by a captain, includes five sections:

- Communications Maintains the statewide radio communications system and is responsible for MHP dispatch. Until July 2003, the MHP maintained dispatch centers in Billings, Missoula, and Helena. MHP is in the process of consolidating the dispatch centers into a centralized facility in Helena. There are 36.5 FTE assigned to the Communications section.

- Fleet and Supply Manages the MHP fleet of vehicles, equipment, uniforms, etc., including division vehicle and equipment records. The section also processes and stores photographs of vehicle crashes investigated by MHP officers. Vehicle replacement is based partly on a 75,000-mile use criteria, as well as the vehicle's overall condition. The patrol replaces approximately 1/3 of the fleet annually (approximately 63 vehicles). There are 3.5 FTE assigned to the Fleet and Supply section.

  Every MHP officer is issued standard equipment by Fleet and Supply for use in conducting day-to-day activities. Standard equipment includes items such as uniforms, weapons, safety equipment, radios and electronic equipment, and a patrol car. All equipment is issued to each officer when they are hired. Depending on the type of equipment, items are normally replaced according to established schedules, when damaged or worn out, or as needed. The following table provides a summary of the equipment issued to MHP officers, including costs, categorized by equipment type upon graduation and field assignment.

Table 2

MHP Officer Equipment Inventory and Costs

DESCRIPTION	COST
Identification (badges, etc)	$259.40
Clothing (uniform, etc)	$1,846.53
Leather Gear (holster, etc)	$269.03
Patrol Equipment (ammunition, etc)	$716.29
Serial Numbered (car, weapons, etc)	$31,756.45
Patrol Car Equipment (MDT, etc)	$10,774.47
TOTAL	$45,622.17

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP Records.

- Motor Vehicle Inspection. Administers the federal and state Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP), which includes inspecting commercial motor vehicles to reduce truck-related crashes, enforcing driver and vehicle safety regulations, conducting carrier safety audits, and providing public education programs. In addition to a central office supervisor in Helena, there are six MCSAP field inspectors located in Billings, Butte, Glendive, Great Falls, and Missoula (2). While inspectors are not commissioned law enforcement officers, the law allows them to issue citations related to vehicle and driver regulations. Inspector positions are in addition to the 206 MHP officer positions.

- Training and Research. Coordinates and tracks training of uniformed and civilian personnel and manages the Highway Patrol Recruit Academy. The section also supplies training resources for city and county law enforcement via MHP officer instructors, as well as conducts research to assist management in program and policy development. There are 4 FTE in the Training and Research section. Page 13 provides additional information about MHP training activities.

- Executive Protection. Provides executive protection for the Governor. Two FTE are assigned to this duty.

Management Services

The third bureau, Management Services, is administered by a civilian and is responsible for all fiscal, personnel, and records management for the division. The majority of the agency's budget and expenditure management is accomplished through this central office

in Helena. There are seven FTE in the Management Services Bureau.

MHP Revenues and Expenditures

MHP is funded primarily by Highway's State Special Revenue funds. The source of this fund is fuel taxes and gross vehicle weight fees. The commercial vehicle inspection function (MCSAP) is funded by 85 percent federal funds with a 15 percent state match. The actual match requirement is 20 percent; however, by utilizing highway patrol officers to assist with truck inspections the state contribution has been reduced. The MHP budget uses approximately 11.2 percent of the Highway's State Special Revenue Account. General Fund money was added to MHP operations by the 1999 Legislature to fund incarceration of MHP violators and prisoner-related medical costs for the 2001 biennium. The 2003 Legislature returned funding of jail costs to the Special Revenue Account for the 2005 biennium. MHP expenditures, by source of funds for the past two biennia, are listed in the following table.

Table 3

MHP Expenditures By Source of Funds
(Fiscal years 2001-02 and 2002-03)

	FY 2001-02	FY 2002-03
Personal Services	$12,762,686	$13,542,864
Operating	$5,035,036	$4,533,931
Equipment	$1,558,933	$1,708,649
Local Assistance	$139,471	$3,261,443
Transfers	$765,205	$797,555
Total	$20,261,331	$23,844,442
General Fund	$1,257,820	$643,563
State Special	$17,513,734	$18,796,883
Fed Special	$1,489,777	$4,403,996
Total	$20,261,331	$23,844,442

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from SABHRS.

MHP Patrol and Non-Patrol Activities

The primary day-to-day activity of an MHP officer is patrol of the Montana highway system. At the beginning of each calendar year, enforcement activity goals are established for every patrol officer. The goals prescribe the minimum number of traffic-related citations

and warnings each officer should attempt to issue during the year. Goals are established and agreed upon through discussions between the officer and their detachment sergeant. Individual officer goals vary by location and may be modified depending on the delegation of other MHP responsibilities such as instructor duties and frequency of crash investigations. For example, according to MHP sergeants the citation goal for a rural officer might be 700 for a calendar year. For an officer assigned to an urban area with more crashes, the goal might be 400 citations a year. Along with established enforcement goals, officers are evaluated annually on a wide range of criteria including:

- Compliance with operations policies and safety requirements
- Emergency response under stressful conditions
- Control of conflicts
- Vehicle driving skills
- Knowledge of statutes/ordinances
- Investigative and report preparation skills
- Interaction with the public
- Officer image

In addition to patrolling Montana's road and highway system, MHP officers are involved in a variety of other duties and responsibilities ranging from inspection of commercial wreckers, commercial vehicles (trucks), and school buses to court case preparation, public education, and roadside assistance to the public. Officers also support and coordinate their activities with other law enforcement agencies in their area of coverage by providing mutual aid, both when requested during emergency circumstances and through planned special events activities. For example, by law MHP officers may assist local police departments or sheriff's offices with anything from a domestic disturbance to a burglary. In other instances, MHP provides traffic patrol in support of events such as concerts, county

fairs, and school activities. The following table provides examples of MHP activities categorized as patrol and non-patrol. A more detailed discussion of patrol versus non-patrol activities is presented in Chapter III.

Table 4

Montana Highway Patrol Activities
(Calendar years 2000 through 2003)

		2000	2001	2002	2003
Patrol	Citations	78,184	85,107	82,933	80,012
	Warnings	96,145	100,298	102,311	99,875
	Traffic Stops *	94,550	100,663	99,980	93,510
	Assist Law Enforcement	4,599	5,479	5,602	4,903
	Assist Public	14,288	14,597	14,486	11,783
Non-Patrol	Safety Education	400	431	519	928
	School Bus Inspections	4,516	4,512	4,837	4,385
	Prisoner Transfer	800	868	871	664
	Accident Investigation				
	Property Damage	8,230	7,577	8,018	7,755
	Injury	3,428	3,214	3,379	3,080
	Fatality	188	191	241	205

* A traffic stop can result in no action, verbal warning, written warning(s), or citation(s). More than one warning or citation can result from a single traffic stop.

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP Records.

MHP Air Operations

As a supplement to ground patrol operations, MHP owns a fixed wing aircraft and a helicopter. The fixed wing aircraft is used for a variety of purposes, including monitoring ground traffic speeds. In conjunction with ground units, the plane determines vehicle speeds and reports those exceeding an established standard. Officers in patrol vehicles will then stop the offender. Due to costs, limited pilot availability, and substantive requirements for patrol vehicle support,

air enforcement operations have been limited in the past. At present, there are two qualified fixed wing pilots in MHP. This aircraft is used for patrol activities approximately 150 hours annually.

A surplus military helicopter is used for law enforcement and search and rescue purposes, accumulating about 70 hours each year. It has also been used for reconnaissance support purposes for ground events such as vehicle caravans. During the time of our audit, there were two qualified helicopter pilots in MHP.

MHP Recruit Academy and Field Training Program

The MHP conducts an annual training academy for prospective MHP officers using the Montana Law Enforcement Academy (MLEA) facilities located in Helena. Applicants are screened through testing and interviews to identify academy candidates. The 24-week session (16-week Academy, and 8 weeks of field training) is a boot camp format where personal discipline and obedience are emphasized in a training environment. Recruits are trained in all aspects of patrol operations from radio use to personal defense. Many of the classes, especially those related to patrol operations, are taught by existing MHP personnel.

Upon graduation, the number of recruits offered positions within the MHP is based on the number of available openings arising from retirements, turnover, and terminations. For example, the 2003 Recruit Academy graduated 14 recruits in June 2003; only five were initially offered immediate patrol officer positions. Placement of the remaining recruits was based on availability of openings. All were employed as officers by January 2004.

Another aspect of training involves the initial on-the-job preparation of newly hired officers. Before recruit academy graduates are assigned to a duty location, a fully qualified officer, designated as a Field Training Officer provides on-the-job training. The new patrol officer receives eight weeks of dedicated on-the-job instruction usually at two different duty stations (one urban and one rural) prior to assignment to a detachment duty station.

Supervision of MHP Officers

An officer can typically determine whether to patrol or conduct a non-patrol activity such as court case preparation or commercial wrecker inspections. Patrol routes are also often at the officer's discretion. They can decide whether to proceed north, south, east, or west, and within general boundaries, decide how far to travel in a particular direction. Officers also have discretion on whether to write a warning versus a citation, and the flexibility to establish the "degree" of violation for speed-related offenses.

Direct day-to-day supervision is the responsibility of a detachment sergeant. For the most part, officers are given flexibility to determine where best to fulfill their daily work obligations. Typically, sergeants supervise on-duty officers through detachment team meetings and visits, telephone and radio contact, and in many cases e-mail. Additionally, officers complete daily activity reports specifying designated activity and time codes. For example, if an officer stops to assist a motorist with a disabled car, the code for public assistance is used to account for the time. Information from officer daily activity reports is normally reviewed by detachment sergeants on a daily, weekly or monthly basis depending on the sergeant's supervisory approach. The information is also loaded into a database and activity information is compiled month to month. In Chapter III, we present a more detailed analysis of the activity report information and officer supervision.

Sergeants also review citations issued by officers to evaluate compliance with statutory requirements and officer consistency. According to MHP policy, sergeants are required to conduct quarterly rides with each officer to evaluate patrol performance and interaction with the public during traffic stops. According to MHP officials, policy also requires quarterly reviews of video tape recordings of activities associated with officer traffic stops.

Technology Improvements

MHP is in the midst of a significant upgrade of reporting and tracking systems used for command and control, patrol officer activity reporting, and crash investigation reporting. At the time of our review, the majority of MHP officers manually documented the

results of patrol activities. Several changes to these capabilities are currently being implemented by MHP.

Mobile Data Terminals

One of the most significant changes involves the installation of mobile data terminals (MDT), which are specialized laptop computers attached to the dashboard of patrol vehicles. MDT units have been installed in approximately 1/3 of MHP's patrol vehicles, primarily in urban areas such as Missoula and Billings. MDT units allow officers to directly access state and federal data systems to check vehicle registration, driver information, and arrest warrants. Without an MDT, officers are required to contact a dispatcher and request this type of information. In addition, the mobile technology provides e-mail communication capability improving officer-to-officer contact. Officers can also use the terminals to record daily activity information and to prepare crash investigation reports, previously accomplished manually and submitted on standard forms. Currently, most officers prepare crash reports in detachment offices for submission to the Montana Accident Record System (MARS). The current system includes a portable version known as MARS Rover allowing officers to work on-scene. The MARS Rover capability has also been incorporated into MDT units.

According to MHP staff, the cost of a single MDT unit is approximately $10,000 per vehicle. MHP has utilized available federal grant funding to purchase MDT units to date. The purchase of more MDT units and continued installation will be spread over several more years.

Centralized Dispatch

In addition to in-car technological changes, during the audit MHP was centralizing statewide dispatch activity in Helena. The new facility, located at Fort Harrison, consolidates dispatch activities previously located in Billings, Helena, and Missoula. Centralization was possible as a result of conversion to a computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. CAD replaces the paper-intensive dispatch approach with an electronic communication and recording system. The first phase of implementation was August 2003 and MHP estimates full implementation by July 2004. The CAD system includes the

capability to incorporate global positioning system (GPS) patrol vehicle tracking. Implementation of this feature is dependent upon installation of MDT units in all vehicles and funding for purchase of individual GPS components. Another feature of the CAD system is an activity tracking capability known as the Records Management System (RMS). According to MHP officials, RMS will replace the manual officer activity reporting system currently being used. Implementation of RMS is estimated for the end of calendar year 2004.

Technology Impacts

In Chapter III, we discuss utilization of resources and how incorporation of some of these upcoming technology advancements can be used in conjunction with increased management direction to improve MHP efficiency and effectiveness. The areas of discussion include:

- Patrol officer priorities
- Patrol officer supervision
- Patrol officer activity reporting

Chapter III – Improving Resource Utilization

Introduction

In this chapter, we review the statutory language associated with the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) and mission of the MHP, and present our analysis of MHP operations. Additionally, we examined the use of available resources by MHP to meet its statutory obligations. To assess the potential for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of MHP operations, we also reviewed the types of activities conducted by patrol officers.

We conclude, because of the limited and widespread resources of the MHP, and because of their multiple responsibilities, there must be a continuous and comprehensive analysis of those resources and responsibilities. We then discuss three areas where there should be more management focus.

Statutory Role and Mission

Montana law does not provide a specific purpose or intent statement for MHP. Our initial review of operations identified a wide range of activities in addition to traffic patrol being conducted by MHP officers. In this section, we identify applicable Montana law, discuss statutory intent, and conclude on MHP compliance.

Traffic Law Enforcement

Section 44-1-303(4), MCA, places responsibility with the chief of the MHP to station patrol officers in localities "for the enforcement of the traffic laws of this state." Statute defines a highway patrol officer as "every state officer authorized to direct or regulate traffic or to make arrests for violations of traffic regulations." This language provides the basis for traffic-related activities conducted by the MHP. In addition, section 44-1-1003, MCA, defines patrol officers as police officers for offenses occurring on highways, rest areas, state highway property, or offenses involving the use of motor vehicles (or registration), and for serving warrants associated with highway and motor vehicle violations.

Activities Are Not Restricted To Traffic

MHP officers are not restricted to traffic and motor vehicle enforcement activities. Section 44-1-1001, MCA, provides arrest criteria for other offenses as follows:

- Offenses committed in the presence of any MHP officer

- Offenses occurring in a rural district and a local peace officer requests assistance, or
- Offenses committed in a city/town of less than 2,500 population and a local peace officer requests assistance.

Under these circumstances, MHP patrol officers are authorized to make arrests for:

- Deliberate homicide
- Assault with a deadly weapon
- Arson
- Criminal mischief
- Burglary
- Theft
- Kidnapping
- Illegal transportation of narcotics
- Automobile theft

Officers Authorized To Jail Offenders or Issue Notices to Appear in Court

After making an arrest, section 44-1-1101, MCA, requires patrol officers to deliver offenders to the nearest justice of the peace or to the county jail or provide a "notice to appear" with instructions to report to the nearest justice of the peace. Statute also allows officers to accept a bond amount for bail in accordance with a bond schedule established by the court of local jurisdiction, or to accept a driver's license in lieu of bail. If after a patrol officer issues a notice to appear in court for a traffic or motor vehicle violation, and a judge determines the person is not going appear, the court may issue an arrest warrant. According to section 46-6-210, MCA, peace officers, including MHP officers, may arrest a person based on the existence of an arrest warrant.

Crash Investigation

Traffic and motor vehicle regulation includes traffic crash investigation and reporting. Section 61-7-108, MCA, requires the driver of a vehicle involved in a crash (injury, death, or over $500 damage) to give notice to the MHP. Patrol officers are responsible for investigating motor vehicle crashes involving fatalities, injuries or damage over $1,000 and completing a crash report within 10 days.

Typically, MHP does not investigate these types of crashes if they occur within a municipality.

MHP Mission and Goals

The mission statement and goals of the MHP are listed below:

- The mission of the Highway Patrol Division is to safeguard the lives and property of the people using the highway traffic system of Montana through education, service and enforcement.
- MHP has established five annual goals:
  - Maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity for all MHP employees
  - Provide law enforcement services to the citizens of Montana in a fair and impartial manner
  - Work tirelessly in cooperation with all appropriate safety agencies through strategies related to engineering, education and enforcement
  - Continue to seek out and employ the newest applicable technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness
  - Encourage all members of the MHP to strive for heightened public safety awareness through positive involvement in community, school and civic organizations

Statutory Intent Interpretation

MHP is responsible for enforcing Montana's traffic laws. For MHP, enforcement is defined as apprehending violators of traffic and motor vehicle regulations. Violators are issued notices to appear in court and may be arrested and jailed. MHP arrest authority extends to traffic-related warrants, observed non-traffic criminal activity, and requests for assistance from local law enforcement. The mission statement expands on enforcement activities to include traffic safety and motor vehicle education and to provide a range of services to the public. MHP goals further clarify the meaning of service to include public relations and assistance and officer image.

Based on our review of Montana law, we developed the following interpretation of the statutory role and responsibilities of MHP:

> *MHP shall use available resources to enforce traffic laws by patrolling Montana's roads and highways, issue citations for traffic and motor vehicle violations, collect bond and make arrests as necessary, and investigate crashes. In addition, MHP may assist local law enforcement agencies when requested.*

Conclusion: MHP is meeting the intent of the law, but both state and local resources can impact resource utilization and decision-making.

The results of our audit work indicate MHP is meeting the intent of the law. We found officers are actively involved in traffic and motor vehicle law enforcement throughout Montana. However, as noted in Chapter II, the district and detachment location maps and the example of number of officers on duty at a given point in time, MHP resources are widely distributed relative to the number of miles and vehicles in Montana. Additionally, statute and mutual reliance on the part of both the MHP and local law enforcement agencies who also typically have limited and widespread resources has, by necessity and design, forged a structure of multi-responsibilities for the MHP.

Their responsibilities (direct and indirect) demand a continuously and carefully balanced approach to utilization of the available resources. We conclude MHP efficiency and effectiveness could be enhanced through priority establishment, increased supervision of personnel, and improved management information collection and analysis. The following sections discuss in more detail how increased efficiency and effectiveness could enhance utilization of existing resources.

Use and Monitoring of Available Resources Determine Organizational Success

Inherent in MHP responsibilities is the efficient and effective use of available resources to meet the traffic and motor vehicle enforcement needs of the state. MHP does not attempt to measure or assess efficiency or effectiveness relative to statutory criteria, mission statement, or established goals. Senior MHP officials described agency success in terms of striving to accomplish any and all tasks and activities falling under the headings of enforcement, education, and service to the public. One of the success indicators cited by

MHP officials was approximately 5.5 million miles driven annually. While miles-driven reflects a level of activity, it does not address the effectiveness of resource utilization.

In the following sections, we examine three areas:

- Prioritization of patrol officer activities
- Supervision of patrol officers
- Availability and usefulness of patrol officer activity information.

Our recommendations in these areas should improve the efficiency of the MHP and effectiveness of resources used for MHP operations.

Patrol Officer Priorities

One concern described initially by MHP command was a reduction of on-the-road patrol capability due to assumption, over the years, of additional officer responsibilities for a broad range of enforcement-related activities. The more responsibilities an organization is assigned or assumes, the less time is available for each of the individual activities. The result can be a decrease in effectiveness in some areas. In addition, MHP command indicated the complexity of officer activities has increased. For example, due to the expectations of the legal system and automobile insurance industry for highly detailed crash investigation reports, officer workload and complexity of the workload has incrementally expanded.

MHP Goal is 50 Percent Patrol Time

Over time, MHP management has established an organizational goal of 50 percent for officer patrol time as a result of command training and interaction with other states. In other words, officers should spend at least half of their on-duty time on traffic patrol. According to MHP officials, patrol time or MHP presence on the road reduces the number of crashes. Information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration supports this contention, indicating a decrease in traffic enforcement can result in an increase in crashes, injuries and fatalities. In addition, our statistical comparison of data from the Monthly Activity Reporting System and the Montana Accident Record System shows a strong correlation between an

increase in the number of patrol hours and a decrease in the number of crashes.

Our review of recent MHP records indicates MHP has not achieved its 50 percent goal, and the amount of time spent on patrol continues to decrease. For calendar year 2003, the MHP reported patrol rate was 43 percent.

MHP Tracks Patrol Officer Activities

MHP categorizes and tracks activities in two areas: patrol and non-patrol. Patrol activities are those directly related to patrolling the roads and highways of Montana such as traffic stops, roadside public assistance, and crash investigation. Examples of non-patrol activities include training, safety education talks, school bus inspections, and arrest warrant management.

We reviewed the daily activity log books for 32 officers for three non-consecutive months in 2002 and 2003 and compiled information on the amount of time spent on specific activities such as crash response and investigation, jail processing, including DUI arrests and arrest warrants, and assistance to local law enforcement. We also compiled information on daily vehicle mileage, traffic stops and citations, and warnings written. The purpose of our review was to determine the impact of these types of activities on day-to-day patrol and traffic enforcement.

Our review revealed a wide variation in types and levels of activities between officers. We identified officers whose duty shift was consistent in terms of the same level of activity virtually every day of the month. We also observed officers whose activity fluctuated significantly from day-to-day and who appeared to focus on enforcement (citations and warnings) either at the beginning or end of the month. The following summary reflects the activity information reviewed.

Table 5

Sampled Officer Activity
(Averaged)

Traffic Enforcement Activity (per month)								
Days Worked	Miles Driven	Traffic			Crash Investigations	Law Enf Assist	Public Assist	Jail Process
		Stops	Warns	Cits				
19	2,658	49	50	41	6	2	6	4

Traffic Enforcement Activity Comparisons				
Miles Driven (per day)	Traffic Stops (per day)	Cits & Warns (per day)	Miles (per citation)	Crash Investigations (per day)
138	3	5	106	0.33

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP Records.

Conclusion: Patrol Enforcement Impacted by Other Duties

Based on these summaries, we concluded patrol activity, measured in terms of enforcement (citations, warnings, and traffic stops), is impacted by the wide range of obligations encountered day-to-day by officers.

Over the years, MHP has assumed responsibilities in addition to those directly related to traffic enforcement. Many of these additional responsibilities relate to a broad range of public service activities such as school safety education talks, demonstration of child restraint devices, support of local law enforcement for special events, and vehicle identification number (VIN) and all terrain vehicle (ATV) inspections. The addition of responsibilities created a situation whereby MHP now tracks over 60 different activities for patrol officers, and the current system is not all inclusive. For example, VIN and ATV inspections are not included in the activity reporting system. The following figure summarizes activities currently tracked by MHP.

Figure 4

MHP Statewide Activity Tracking
(Calendar year 2003)

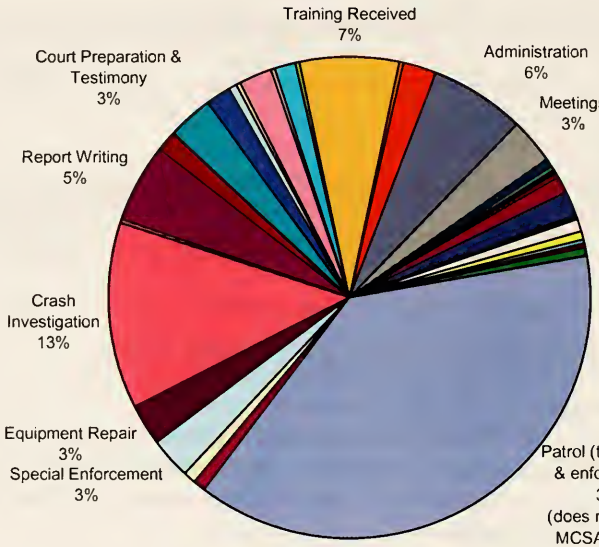


Figure includes 55 activities, which are designated by the hour; however, only 34 are visible.

The other 21 activities do not show on the figure due to low hours recorded.

NOTE: only activities with 3% or higher are labeled. Unlabeled activities total 19%.

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP records.

Establishing Priorities Based on Risk

To help us focus on MHP's most important officer activities, we judgmentally established three categories based on the level of risk to the public if the activity were not completed, at least by MHP officers. These categories were discussed with, and generally agreed upon by MHP command. The categories are as follows:

- High-risk, non-discretionary. This category includes activities such as traffic stops and enforcement, calls for service requiring an officer to respond, officer training, court preparation and testimony, crash investigation and report preparation, and

roadside public assistance. High-risk, non-discretionary activities are critical, must be completed, and the use of MHP officers is consistent with statute.

- High-risk, discretionary. This category includes activities such as assistance to local law enforcement, commercial truck inspections, and other governmental assistance (federal and state). High-risk, discretionary activities are important, and should be completed.

- Low-risk, discretionary. This category includes activities such as investigation of non-injury, low-dollar value crashes, ATV and VIN inspections, commercial wrecker inspections, school bus inspections, prisoner transfer, and arrest warrant management. Low-risk, discretionary activities may or may not need to be completed on a day-to-day basis, or the use of MHP officers to conduct them may or may not be necessary.

Our listing of activities is not intended to cover all activities currently completed by MHP officers. It is intended to provide a representation of the potential for prioritizing activities to improve resource utilization and specifically enhance patrol capability. Many of these are low-risk activities and time spent here takes away from time spent on high-risk activities. We believe MHP officers should focus resources on high-risk, non-discretionary and discretionary activities. To accomplish this, it is important for MHP command to identify alternatives for completing low-risk activities.

Alternatives for Low-Risk, Discretionary Priorities

To consider alternatives for the low-risk, discretionary category, we examined three examples:

- VIN and ATV inspections. MHP officers indicated VIN and ATV inspections are time-consuming and tend to interrupt other patrol and non-patrol activities planned for the day. While the monthly activity reporting system does not track these inspections, MHP district officials indicated it was not unusual to conduct up to four or five such inspections on the busiest days. In general, most officers do not immediately respond to a request for a VIN or ATV inspection. However, a request changes the intended patrol activity for the work shift because the officer commits to arriving at the location of the vehicle at some specified time. Other situations can also increase the number of inspections. For example, in one MHP district, local law

enforcement charges a fee for VIN inspections. As a result, the MHP district receives more calls for these inspections because MHP provides this public service free of charge.

We believe there are several alternatives that could reduce the impact of VIN and ATV inspections on MHP patrol time and accomplishment of higher risk activities. For this example, alternatives could include scheduling specified days or hours during the day when vehicles can be brought to a district or detachment office for inspection, as is currently done in one district for ATV inspections. Another alternative would be to contract for provision of these services. Montana law does not require the use of a uniformed officer for VIN or ATV inspections. Retired MHP or other law enforcement officers, commercial vehicle dealers, or vehicle repair facilities are all potential sources for an inspection service contract. Finally, by charging a fee to reimburse the department for the service provided, MHP could pay for the contract; however, additional statutory authority to do so would likely be required.

- School bus inspections. Montana law requires an inspection of all school buses to meet minimum standards of the Board of Public Education. During calendar year 2003, MHP officers recorded over 1,100 hours for school bus inspections, and this does not always include travel time to and from bus locations. Again, the law does not require uniformed officers to conduct school bus inspections. Rather, the law designates the Department of Justice as responsible for conducting the inspections. One alternative to the use of uniformed officers would be service contracts with local vehicle repair businesses authorized to complete inspections. Over 1,100 more hours could be available for patrol and enforcement.

- Arrest warrant management. Another example of a low-risk discretionary activity that should be considered for alternative resources is arrest warrant management for traffic offenses. For calendar year 2003, two districts expended almost 500 hours on warrant management, while two other districts expended 100 hours or less. In the most active districts, warrants are assigned to officers with an expectation to attempt to contact the individual 2-3 times within 30 days. In other districts, warrants are logged and tracked, but not assigned to officers for investigation. Only if the individual is stopped by MHP or local law enforcement for another offense is the warrant served.

To reduce the use of resources for warrant management, we believe an alternative would be to prioritize warrants based on the fine imposed. For example, an arrest warrant for a $500 fine for leaving the scene of an injury crash might justify an expenditure of MHP officer time. A warrant for failure to appear in court for a $20 speeding fine probably would not be a high priority. This priority approach (if acceptable to applicable courts) would reduce officer workload, making more resources available for patrol. Another alternative would involve the use of non-uniformed MHP administrative staff to make preliminary telephone contacts with individuals identified on arrest warrants. These staff could advise the individual of the need to appear in court or face arrest. As a third alternative, MHP could increase emphasis on collection of required bond at the time the notice to appear is issued. Collection of bond reduces the potential for the court to issue an arrest warrant when an individual does not appear and pay the fine. By reducing warrant management activity to the minimum of 100 hours reflected by two districts, approximately 900 additional hours would be available for patrol and enforcement.

Summary: MHP Should Prioritize Activities to Increase Patrol Time

To continue to improve the effective and efficient use of available resources, organizations should evaluate where and how resources are expended. Prioritizing work activities focuses resources on the most important requirements. For MHP, we believe the most important activities should be those categorized as high-risk, non-discretionary, with high-risk, discretionary following closely. By focusing on high-risk activities, the amount of time officers spend on traffic patrol should increase. Alternatives should be considered for the lower priority, low-risk, discretionary activities. Alternatives include:

- Reducing the required activity.
- Concentrating or scheduling activities to reduce the total time expended by officers.
- Contracting or using other resources for completion of the activity, and/or charging a fee.

Recommendation #1
We recommend MHP:

A. Prioritize patrol and non-patrol activities.

B. Focus MHP patrol officer resources on high-risk, non-discretionary, and discretionary activities.

C. Identify alternatives for low-risk, discretionary activities.

Patrol Officer Activity Reporting

Designed in the early 1980s, the MHP's Monthly Activity Reporting System is a DOS-based computer system used to collect and report officer activities. These recorded activities include patrol time, vehicle mileage, the number of and types of notices to appear, and the hours and types of non-patrol activities conducted. Appendix B illustrates an example of the summary data of the reporting system.

While detachment sergeants, district captains, and central office personnel use both activity and crash data to varying degrees, activity information is the primary source of information reflecting day-to-day detachment and district operations. We identified concerns with the reliability and inconsistent use of monthly activity data. Based on our review of activity reporting and how data is coded and utilized, we determined the current process needs to be improved to better assess MHP operations.

Activity Coding is Inconsistent

Code information from each officer's daily reports is manually input by a detachment sergeant or a designee into the activity-reporting database. We found wide variation in the interpretation and use of coding by officers and sergeants. We also identified other codes including those for crash investigation report preparation, local law enforcement assistance, and court case preparation, which are not used consistently. As a result, the information compiled in the activity reporting system does not consistently and completely reflect all daily activities.

Patrol Time Definitions are Problematic

A key example reflecting our concern with consistency and accuracy is road and highway patrol time. Most officers indicated the time required to travel to a training site, to detachment meetings, and to conduct vehicle or equipment inspections is coded as patrol time, but officers also acknowledged they typically do not use radar and tend to ignore most minor traffic violations while in transit to training and/or meetings. Another example reflecting the inaccuracy of patrol time information is coding the lunch break. Approximately 45 minutes per shift for each officer is designated by policy to the patrol code. For 165 patrol officers, this equates to almost 30,000 hours annually.

During calendar year 2003, 123,500 hours were recorded for patrol, allowing MHP to establish a 43 percent patrol rate. If the lunch period is excluded, the patrol rate is closer to 30 percent.

Another example of coding inconsistency/inaccuracy was noted with regard to officer documentation of time spent conducting a patrol-related activity. For example, a five-minute stop to check on a stranded motorist is often coded to the "public assist" activity code. However, time designated to the activity by individual officers varies. All officers use arbitrarily designated time periods for coding activities, and actual time spent is typically "rounded-up" to the nearest time period. However, some officers use 10- or 15-minute time segments while others use 30-minute time segments. The lack of consistent supervisory guidance regarding use of designated time segments compounds system consistency and accuracy issues.

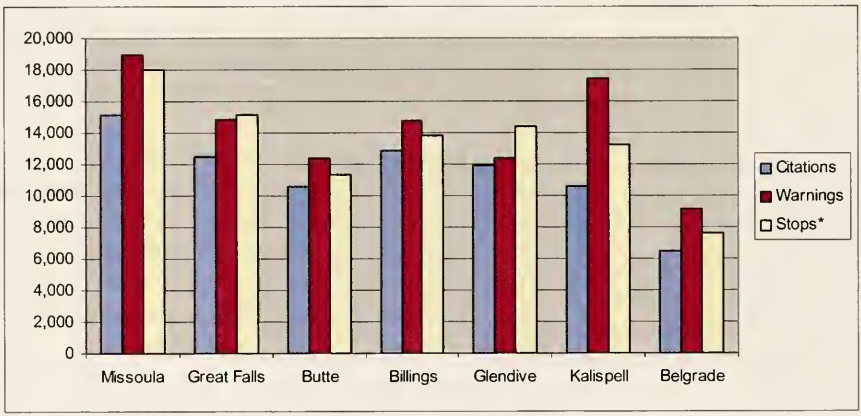
Activity Information is not Used by Management

In addition to accuracy, limited use of daily activity information by Helena command and district captains is a concern. Although the activity reporting system offers some opportunity to analyze patrol operations due to the numerous activities coded, only 7 of 60 coded activities are reflected in the MHP annual report. Overall, data from the activity reporting system does not appear to be formally used for statewide analysis of MHP activities or allocation of personnel resources.

This is significant because there appears to be opportunities to use data regarding officer activities to help direct MHP operations. For example, to compare district operations regarding enforcement activities we asked the following question: *What is the relationship between the number of warnings, citations, and traffic stops?* Figure 5 provides a comparison of the data MHP recorded in these categories for calendar year 2003.

Figure 5

Traffic Patrol Comparison
(Calendar year 2003)



* A traffic stop can result in no action, verbal warning, written warning(s), or citation(s). More than one warning or citation can result from a single traffic stop.

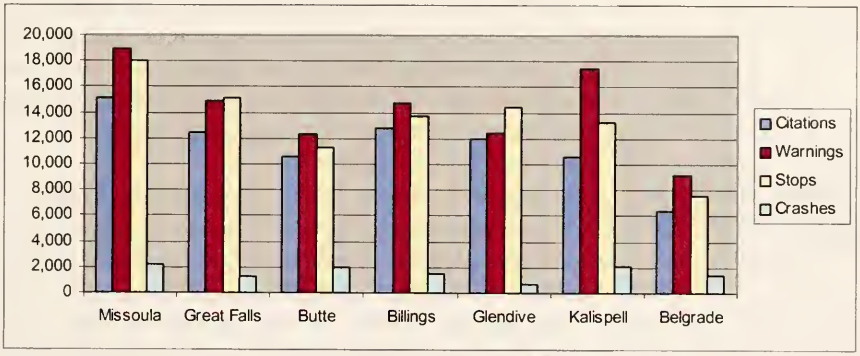
Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP Records.

Our review shows in one district (Glendive) 1.03 warnings are issued for every citation issued, while in another district (Kalispell) the ratio is 1.64 warnings for each citation. Similarly, in one district (Glendive) a combination of 1.69 citations and warnings are written for each traffic stop, while another district (Belgrade) writes 2.05 citations and warnings for each stop, a 21 percent difference.

Based on the data in figure 5, we asked the question, "*Are there valid traffic and safety reasons for the district operational differences reflected by the data, or other factors such as officer availability that could be impacting the data?*" According to MHP officials, crash investigations may account for officers spending less time on patrol and therefore making fewer stops. To gauge this assessment, we examined the number of crashes investigated in each district. However, crash information (Figure 6) shows the districts with the fewest stops are not necessarily the ones with the most crashes.

Figure 6

Traffic Patrol and Crash Comparison
(Calendar year 2003)



Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP Records.

Further review of the data provided above generates even more questions about operational activity such as: *How does the number of stops influence citations and warnings?* For example, figure 6 shows the Great Falls and Glendive districts have more traffic stops than citations and warnings, whereas the other districts have more warnings than stops and citations. This variation is significant in the Kalispell district.

In-depth examination of activity information provides an opportunity to evaluate existing performance measures

From an alternative operational effectiveness assessment viewpoint, a follow-up question could be: *Would number of traffic stops serve as a more useful officer or district goal than the current citation and warning goals?* Our statistical analysis of activity and crash data showed a strong correlation between an increase in traffic stops and citations and a decrease in crashes. While we cannot answer these questions for MHP, we believe MHP command and district captains should be more comprehensively analyzing collected data to assess operations.

Antiquated System is Part of the Problem

As noted previously in this chapter, the Monthly Activity Reporting System was established in the early 1980's using now outdated computer technology. Additionally, since the system's initial development, there have been no significant modifications made by MHP relative to the type of reports generated or to improve "ease of use" of the system's data. As a consequence, using the activity reporting system as a management information tool is both limited and unwieldy. This makes the system problematic as a management tool for use in comprehensive command decision making.

Data Analysis is Primarily Limited to Review of Officer Productivity

As a result of system limitations, detachment sergeants appear to be the only primary users of activity information as a supervisory tool. For some sergeants, review of this information primarily occurs as the data is manually input into the database. Others only focus on data reflecting the status of the three performance goals established individually for officers (citations, warnings, and DUI arrests). We interviewed only a few sergeants who indicated they use detachment-level summary reports to compare overall officer activity and track the amount of time spent on selected activities. At present, neither the district captains nor Helena command personnel fully or formally use the Monthly Activity Reporting System to analyze and deploy resources.

Data Extraction is Complicated

The antiquated data collection system does not provide a straightforward capability for analyzing information. Technical limitations of the current system reduce the ability of MHP supervisors and management to easily extract and compare data. In

addition to the time spent by MHP staff generating reports for our use, we found it necessary to spend additional time consolidating data and developing formats to make the data useful for our analysis. MHP supervisors and management struggle with the same problem when trying to use monthly activity information. If management does not assure information is available to supervisors in a useful format, the information simply will not be used.

New Technology Provides Opportunities to Improve Management Information

In Chapter II, we discuss new technology acquisitions currently underway within MHP. Regarding monthly activity information, MHP officials indicate the Records Management System (RMS) will eventually replace the current manual reporting system. We believe MHP should take advantage of the technology upgrade opportunity to improve its ability to analyze operations and assess effectiveness. Simply converting the existing manual code system to an electronic version does not do this. During our review of a sample of officer daily activity logs, we noted the narrative portion of the form provides considerable detail about officer activities but it is not incorporated into the information compiled from the activity codes. For example, the amount of time for officers to respond to crashes following notification by dispatch is typically noted in the narrative. Potentially useful information is being recorded by officers but is not included in the database and is not available for operational assessment. For RMS to provide an improved capability, we believe MHP should redesign activity-reporting capabilities to reflect officer priorities, supervisory needs, and operational performance indicators.

With the planned technological upgrade, we believe the time is right to evaluate operational requirements and collect the type of information useful to supervisors and management. For example, MHP currently collects data on:

- Sixty-three different types of citations and warnings
- Patrol time spent on state highways versus county roads
- Information on the number of crashes investigated

However, the current system does not provide a capability to analyze these three data elements to identify highway or road segments reflecting a traffic violation or crash trend. With a built-in analysis capability, sergeants and captains could more easily define operational priorities for the districts and detachments.

Operational Effectiveness Should be Reported

The annual report currently prepared by MHP is required by section 61-7-115, MCA. Statute requires the Department of Justice to tabulate and analyze all crash reports, providing statistical information related to the number and circumstances of crashes. MHP includes a limited amount of each district's operational activity information in the annual report. By using the new technologies to help record and compile information related to resource utilization, summary information should be available to provide formal assessments of MHP effectiveness. For example, if a segment of highway reflects a crash or traffic violation trend such that supervisors shift resources or establish patrol priorities as a response, the reporting system should reflect the results of the effort. Both problem traffic areas and MHP efforts to respond could be reported. We believe with modification the current annual report could provide an appropriate venue for reporting operational effectiveness.

Recommendation #2
We recommend MHP:

A. Identify data needed to better measure the effectiveness of MHP operations.

B. Determine proper collection/compilation methodologies and integrate these into new technologies.

C. Analyze and report operational effectiveness and status.

Patrol Officer Supervision

According to MHP policy, sergeants are responsible for direct supervision of patrol officers. Policy also outlines supervision criteria for 30 different patrol officer duties including:

- Emergency vehicle operation
- Commercial vehicle inspections
- Radar policy
- Speed enforcement
- Search/inventories/interdiction.

The sergeant job description includes additional responsibilities such as safeguarding the public on roads and highways by ensuring officers are enforcing Montana motor vehicle laws.

Majority of Sergeant Time is Paperwork Intensive

During our review of field operations, we found many sergeants spend the majority of their time performing administrative duties in the office rather than spending time on the road for patrol and direct officer supervision. We noted examples of sergeants recording over 90 percent of available time to non-patrol activities each month.

Supervisory span of control is comparable among all districts, but hours of supervision varies

Review of monthly activity report information revealed a wide disparity between MHP districts regarding sergeant's time for supervision. For calendar year 2003, two districts recorded a total of 1,624 hours and 1,437 hours respectively, for supervision of officers. Two other districts recorded 326 hours and 91 hours respectively, for the year. By comparing MHP's supervision data to the number of sergeants assigned to each district, we identified an average documented supervision level for districts ranging from 30 hours annually to over 500 hours annually for each sergeant, although every sergeant supervises approximately the same number of officers in a detachment.

According to sergeants we interviewed, the current supervision approach is paperwork intensive and includes requirements to review officer daily logs and activity reports, crash, search, and pursuit

reports, and copies of citations issued by officers. Our review of administrative workload confirmed sergeants spend considerable time:

- Reviewing daily logs, crash reports, and citations
- Entering data into the MHP monthly activity reporting system
- Compiling selected information for federally funded projects
- Preparing officer evaluations based on data collected

Variations in officer patrol practices and procedures suggest more on-the-road supervision by sergeants is warranted

We found the amount and type of guidance sergeants provide to officers concerning patrol versus non-patrol priorities is minimal. Our review of officer daily activity logs indicated it was not unusual for officers to drive in excess of 200 miles on a shift, recording time to a patrol activity code, yet no citations or warnings were issued. Most officers are free to determine patrol routes and traffic coverage locations. Additionally, most officers agreed traffic volume and congestion are typically associated with higher crash rates. However, we found some officers avoid coverage of dense traffic areas or times to avoid being caught up in the congestion, while others focus on areas of dense traffic. We also observed inconsistencies in officer patrol activities such as bond collection procedures, use of stationary radar, approaching a stopped vehicle, radio communications, patrol within municipal boundaries, and determinations of minimal speeds for making stops and issuing tickets or warnings.

While none of the process or procedural inconsistencies noted in the paragraph above, by themselves, suggest systemic concerns with the quality of MHP field operations, they do infer a lack of comprehensive supervisory assurance all officers comply with established MHP policy and procedure. To further substantiate our observations regarding limited supervision of officers, we noted inconsistent compliance by sergeants with MHP policy requiring quarterly evaluation of each officer during a ride in the officer's vehicle to observe conformity with operational procedures and the officer's interaction with the public. Some sergeants do not conduct

the rides with the senior patrol officers. Others count office meetings or appearance at a crash scene as completion of a quarterly observation.

A significant portion of the role of supervision, especially in a decentralized organization such as MHP, is to help standardize procedural activities and reduce the risks of noncompliance with established policies. Due to the variations in how sergeants supervise officers (relative to policy and the position's job description), we believe there are substantive inconsistencies in the amount and type of officer supervision throughout the state. Further, operational inconsistencies impact the use of resources including vehicles and gasoline consumption. Finally, inefficient use of these types of limited resources can reduce the overall effectiveness of an organization.

Patrol Officers Want More Active Supervision

The current paperwork-focused supervision approach increases MHP reliance on the quality of officer recruitment and training in lieu of direct on-the-road supervision. While promotion of officers to sergeants rewards the highest caliber officers, paperwork requirements and other administrative duties assigned by captains hinders MHP's most appropriate utilization of these personnel. That is, to mentor and supervise the officers in their detachments, and provide an experienced on-the-road MHP presence. During interviews, patrol officers indicated a desire for more supervision and specifically more sergeant presence during patrol to improve decision making and on-the-job training, and to increase assistance with activities such as stationary radar, crash investigations, and consent searches for drugs and contraband. In addition, some officers expressed a desire for more direct supervisory observation of their patrol performance for appraisal purposes.

20 Percent Increase Equates to 10,000 Hours of Patrol

Historically, states, including Montana, increased the number of officers and highway patrol presence in response to increases in crash and fatality rates. We believe MHP presence on Montana's roadways can be increased by diverting sergeant time from office administration and paperwork supervision to patrol and on-the-road

supervision. This could be accomplished by taking advantage of new technologies and internal re-prioritization of administrative duties. Through increasing sergeant patrol activities, there would be a direct increase in patrol across the state. In our review of the daily activity reports of a sample of 17 sergeants, we found the average amount of time recorded for patrol was 30 percent. For all 25 sergeants, the number assigned to field operations, this 30 percent equates to 15,000 hours of patrol annually. If all 25 sergeants were to patrol 50 percent of the time, an additional 10,000 hours could potentially be achieved. In addition to a direct increase in sergeant patrol presence, there could be an associated indirect increase in other patrol hours.

Additional Presence Provides Other Benefits

We believe the additional presence of sergeants on patrol increases operational capabilities allowing for enhanced enforcement coverage of traffic areas and activities now only minimally addressed by the MHP. For example, consent searches for drugs, weapons, or other contraband are not conducted very often because it is too difficult and dangerous for one officer to control multiple passengers while searching a vehicle. Additionally, increased patrol presence has been shown to reduce crashes, so increasing patrol time for sergeants could benefit public safety. With readily available backup, officers could take advantage of opportunities to initiate more consent searches. More importantly, on-the-scene or on-the-road evaluation of officers, in lieu of the current paper evaluation, should improve conformity with policies and allow for a more realistic and complete performance appraisal. An on-the-road supervision approach also provides a basis for enhancing the quality of in-service training.

Test Patrol-Oriented Supervision Before Statewide Implementation

To verify advantages and identify any disadvantages associated with sergeants spending less time on paperwork and more time on patrol, we recommend MHP implement a pilot project. Two detachments, one urban and one rural, could be selected to evaluate the recommendation for a more patrol-oriented approach to supervision. The first step in this process would be to establish measurable patrol standards for sergeants. Patrol performance goals for sergeants should include a designated amount of available time spent on the

road, crash investigations, motor vehicle traffic enforcement stops, and direct officer observation and supervision criteria. Detachment office administrative requirements should be a very low priority during the period of the pilot project.

Following the pilot project, MHP should assess administrative requirements to determine what happened to field operations when administrative requirements were delayed or not accomplished at all. While the first goal should be to reduce or eliminate unnecessary administrative requirements, the second goal should be to identify statewide alternatives to using sergeants to complete administrative requirements determined to be necessary. Similar to the alternatives considered for recommendation #1, we believe the list of options should include utilizing contracts and retired MHP officers, and/or establishing criteria for justification for part-time administrative support staff to assume some of the present tasks now completed by sergeants. The following recommendations summarize our findings regarding patrol officer supervision and expansion of MHP patrol capabilities. The resources to accomplish the recommendations in this chapter are discussed in the next section of the report.

Recommendation #3

We recommend MHP:

A. Establish a pilot project to increase the on-the-road presence of selected sergeants and assess the impacts of eliminating or reducing sergeants current administrative workload.

B. Establish on-the-road patrol performance goals for sergeants, including patrol time, crash investigations, officer observations, and traffic enforcement stops.

C. Decrease administrative requirements for all sergeants by identifying alternatives such as eliminating office-based administrative requirements, utilizing contracts, including retired MHP officers, and/or establishing criteria to justify part-time administrative support positions.

Resource Utilization Summary

Based on our review of Montana law, we interpreted MHP legislative intent to mean: enforcing traffic laws by patrolling Montana's roads and highways. To achieve intent, MHP has to utilize available resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. We developed recommendations in three areas involving resource utilization:

- Increase patrol time by finding alternatives for low priority discretionary activities currently accomplished by MHP officers.
- Redefine data collection requirements, methodologies, and analyses to provide for direct assessment of legislative intent and operational effectiveness.
- Increase officer supervision and patrol by reducing the amount of time sergeants spend on administrative duties.

Implementation of these recommendations should improve MHP capability to conduct traffic enforcement and patrol operations.

Examination of existing resource expenditures and patrol philosophies could provide opportunities to fund the suggested alternatives

Each of the areas we identified for improvement creates a new or different resource challenge for MHP. However, given the current demand on available MHP funding, before MHP seeks funding for additional resources, examination of how current funding is used is necessary. Although the physical presence of MHP vehicles on Montana's highways is important from a public safety perspective, how the presence is maintained or increased directly impacts available funding. For example, strategies such as increasing supervision to direct and expand the use of stationary radar and controlling patrol routes and miles driven could potential reduce patrol expenditures without adversely impacting public safety. In the absence of increased funding/resources, this more directed approach to patrol activities could provide a necessary source of funding to support the resource alternatives proposed in our recommendations.

Chapter IV - Review of MHP Personnel Issues

Introduction

As noted in the introduction to the audit report, MHP command identified officer pay and retention as the largest challenge facing the agency. [Over the past several legislative sessions and during the current interim, MHP officials have made various presentations to legislative committees discussing the lack of change in the overall number of patrol officers since 1972. They have also expressed their concerns with low officer pay relative to that of some city and county law enforcement agencies in the state.]

In the Chapter III summary we suggest MHP first look internally for potential resources to help increase patrol capabilities. In this chapter we present information that indeed shows MHP officer salary is lower than law enforcement personnel in selected Montana counties and that there is an increase in the percentage of officer turnover in the past five years. This issue is an area for legislative examination.

MHP Command Asserts Entire Agency Is Impacted By Inability To Retain Officers

MHP's contention is low officer pay relative to the pay of local agencies is causing significant turnover. MHP command cites turnover as a major reason for operational shortfalls. Replacement officers take time and resources to train. The MHP Recruit Academy provides the fundamentals, but for officers to learn the kind of judgment and decision making needed to operate autonomously, on-the-road experience is required. While the development of a competent officer depends on the individual, MHP believes it takes three to five years to establish the proper habits and skills that enforce positive behavior. Within this context, MHP is concerned turnover most often involves officers at the three to five year point. Although these officers would like to complete a career in MHP, they leave because of pay. MHP officials assert this leaves the agency with fewer experienced officers. The retention problem forces the agency to expend more on training to maintain an acceptable level of experience, while municipal and county law enforcement agencies benefit without paying for the training. In addition to operational disruptions, there is a dollar cost associated with turnover. Our review found training a replacement officer costs

approximately $25,000, including academy instruction and initial dedicated on-the-job training.

The following sections discuss our review of general compensation considerations for organizations, and MHP concerns. It also provides a recommendation for MHP to initiate a review of current job requirements and officer classification.

Salary Comparison

Organizations (state government or private sector) conduct salary analyses to determine if they are competitive within regional, and in some cases national and international, markets. In this type of analysis, it is important to determine which benchmarks to survey based upon geographic realities, similarity of job duties, and categories of professions. In addition to being responsive to market forces for employee recruitment, organizations must also be sensitive to the internal salary structure to ensure jobs are equitable to one another with respect to duties and level of responsibility. In the following section, we discuss equity and pay competitiveness.

Internal Equity

MHP, as a division within the Department of Justice, is part of the statewide pay and classification system. To maintain an equity based compensation system, similar levels of responsibility should fit into the same pay grade, while maintaining variance in specific duties. To analyze jobs and assign pay grades, any state agency, in coordination with the Department of Administration (DOA) uses a "factor point" evaluation to dissect the components of any particular job classification and assigns points based on factors such as educational/training requirements, level of autonomy, diversity of work duties, and supervision.

External Markets

The salary concerns raised by MHP do not focus on other jobs within state government, but rather with inequities related to municipal and county law enforcement agencies. A sworn law enforcement officer has designated powers and responsibilities regardless of the employing governmental unit. MHP officers look to municipal, county, and federal agencies for employment opportunities throughout the course of a career. MHP officers and municipal

police officers and deputy sheriffs provide back up for one another on a daily basis. MHP officers view themselves as colleagues to local officers; and there is a collective belief that although different agencies have some differences with respect to mission and statutory authority, the common goal is public safety.

MHP Officer Pay is not Competitive with Applicable External Markets

Since MHP officers compare their pay to municipal and county officers, the agency surveyed sheriff's offices in counties with MHP district offices. We reviewed the methodology and data from MHP and determined the counties selected provide a good comparison for salary analysis. We updated the salary information collected by MHP. Table 6 shows salary comparisons as of November 2003. All salaries are hourly and reflect the starting salaries for county sheriff's deputies.

Table 6

Deputy Sheriff Starting Hourly Salaries
(as of November 2003)

Gallatin	$18.29
Yellowstone	$18.19
Missoula	$18.03
Lewis and Clark	$17.18
Butte-Silver Bow *	$17.09
Flathead	$16.65
Dawson	$16.52
Cascade	$14.80
MHP	$12.90

* after probationary period
Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division

The table shows MHP salaries are lower than the salaries of officers in local law enforcement agencies. Depending on the location, an MHP officer who decides to switch to a county agency can make from $1.90 to $5.39 more per hour to start. While not all county law

enforcement agencies in Montana pay the salaries listed for the representative counties, we noted typically MHP is not competing with the lower population counties which normally have lower salaries. In addition, our examination shows the majority of MHP turnover occurred from officers located in the eight counties identified above.

Reconciling Internal Versus External Markets

In addition to maintaining the classification system, DOA is charged by section 2-18-301, MCA, with conducting periodic reviews to provide the market-based compensation necessary to attract and retain competent and qualified employees to perform the services the state is required to provide to its citizens. Again, DOA's charge is not to achieve parity for any one state position with organizations outside of state government, but rather to monitor market forces and the impact on state employees as a whole. The question becomes: *In the need to balance internal equity with external competitiveness, which component should be the priority in a case where these two seem to be in conflict?*

One challenge for all state governments in maintaining competitiveness with local markets is the flexible nature of regional tax bases. To a large degree, the tax base determines the county's ability to pay law enforcement officers. While the MHP example reflects how the state is competing with municipal and county agencies for recruitment and retention of law enforcement personnel, it is not realistic for any state to expect to match every local jurisdiction. Nationally, newly developed municipalities and fast growing counties are more capable of increasing salaries to bring in the most qualified recruits and/or seasoned officers. Our review of the counties selected for comparison shows a full range of population demographics and tax bases. According to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau dating back to 1960, the eight counties represent some of the fastest growing counties in Montana (Missoula, Gallatin, Flathead), counties with a more static growth rate (Cascade, Lewis and Clark, and Yellowstone), and counties with a decreasing population over the time period (Butte-Silver Bow, Dawson). Thus a statewide average salary comparison represents a full range

of counties and local tax bases for Montana. The following table shows the average comparison:

Table 7

Deputy Sheriff Average Hourly Salary with MHP Comparison
(as of November 2003)

Average County Salary	$17.09
MHP	$12.90
Difference	($4.19)

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division

MHP Officer Activities are Now More Complex

Based on our review of MHP, we recognize changes in the complexity of MHP activities. For example, use of vehicle mobile data terminals for communications, accessing state and federal vehicle registration and driver arrest records, daily activity report preparation, new requirements for homeland security coordination with federal agencies, all reflect an apparent increase in requirements for technical competency. The most serious crashes are currently investigated using an on-scene capability known as total station, utilizing a sophisticated GPS mapping capability. In addition, changing criteria for hazardous material and evidence controls associated with illegal drug activities further complicates the traditional enforcement duties associated with MHP.

While state law establishes the minimum qualification for law enforcement officers, we noted several agencies have recently begun advertising for applicants with college degrees in recognition of the increased complexity of the law enforcement profession. The City of Billings, City of Missoula, and Lewis and Clark County currently increase application scoring for college degrees and encourage college graduates to apply in recruiting materials. In addition to these local agencies, the states of Idaho and North Dakota are now requiring associate's and bachelor's degrees respectively. In lieu of

a specific degree requirement, other agencies are increasing recruitment scoring for applicants with college degrees. We discussed the need for college degrees for law enforcement officers with the municipal and county agency contacts. The benefits these officials described are listed below:

- College campuses (both two and four year) require individuals to take classes and work in teams with people from different racial/ethic, socioeconomic, and ideological backgrounds. Since law enforcement officers serve all of the public, this is an important perspective.

- While a criminal justice degree is typical, it is not necessarily preferred. The core skills of writing, making public presentations, and thinking/analysis common to all college degrees are the real requirements for new officers.

- With college degrees (associates or bachelors), the average age of the applicant pool tends to be a little older, and excludes individuals out of high school with less experience.

Sheriffs and police chiefs emphasized while many factors influence whether a recruit will make a successful law enforcement officer, educational background is a good general indicator of analytical thinking and decision making required for law enforcement activities. It is also not unusual for agencies requiring degrees to also use a qualifying condition such as "relevant training or experience allowing for performance of MHP officer duties" to substitute for the degree requirement. Applicable military police or security experience and training or previous law enforcement experience would meet the intent of this standard. A requirement for a college degree is not viewed as applicable in all situations, rather it is a general component of a perspective officer's background intended to recognize the increased complexity of the law enforcement profession. Recruiters continue to address specific skill sets already valued, including public presence/speaking, report writing, analytical skills, public education initiatives, court testimony, and professional development.

Retention: Why MHP Officers are Leaving the Patrol

MHP command conducts employee exit interviews with all officers who leave the agency. Exit interview information for the past ten years follows:

Figure 7

Reasons for Leaving MHP

Retired	74 (45.4%)
Pay Increase (other law enforcement agency)	55 (33.7%)
Terminated	14 (8.5%)
Resigned for other reasons	7 (4.3%)
Private Sector	7 (4.3%)
Disability Retirement	5 (3.1%)
Deceased	1 (0.6%)
TOTAL	163 (100%)

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP records.

We requested additional background information. MHP provided a list of officers who left during the last ten years, and included the reasons for leaving, termination date, rank, and the agency of employment. All of the 55 individuals who left MHP for local law enforcement agencies were in the rank of patrol officer; there was no turnover at the rank of sergeant or higher. We contacted local law enforcement agencies to verify the employment of these former MHP officers. While there were some officers who left for other states' highway patrols, the majority of the turnover reflects MHP officers leaving for employment in the counties (either municipal or county agencies) identified previously.

Increased Rate of Turnover

Review of termination dates revealed 55 officers left for other law enforcement agencies over the past ten years, representing 33.7 percent of the total turnover. Thirty-five officers or 43 percent left

during the last five years. This trend appears to show accelerating turnover. If the trend continues, MHP would see more than 50 percent of their turnover consisting of officers leaving for local law enforcement agencies within the next four to five years.

Municipal and County Agency Perspective

We contacted a sample of municipal and county agencies to discuss recruitment, compensation, and state/local cooperation. Both cities and counties of varying sizes were included, but the majority were agencies recently hiring MHP officers. The following summarizes prevailing opinions among administrators in the sample we contacted:

- Policies differ on whether or not a current MHP officer receives an advantage during the hiring process at a local agency. Larger counties indicated MHP officers did not necessarily gain an advantage, whereas smaller municipalities indicated MHP experience would be a significant advantage.

- Recruitment classes for the MHP Recruit Academy, as well as local law enforcement agencies, have been smaller and finding qualified recruits has become more difficult during the last decade. All administrators expressed the need to keep an eye on varied aspects of recruitment (compensation, opportunity for advancement, agency profile, etc) to make sure another jurisdiction does not gain too much of an advantage in the Montana market. Several local law enforcement officials said MHP is not competitive due to state compensation levels.

- There are reasons beyond pay enticing an officer to change agencies. Specifically, local agency job diversity makes the work environment more attractive over the course of a career. Diversity is separate from promotional opportunities in which an individual can progress up the career ladder. Local officers, either a sheriff's deputy or a police officer can specialize in investigations (detective), drug task force, S.W.A.T., off-road/snowmobile enforcement, search and rescue, school resource officer, etc. In most cases, these assignments do not mean a pay raise or promotion above the rank of a car-based local patrol officer, rather they offer an incentive local agencies say can be as important as compensation.

Summary and Conclusion

MHP believes officer pay should be comparable with Montana's municipal and county law enforcement agencies. The data MHP

used in their review accurately reflects the current status of law enforcement salaries across the state. Our review indicates MHP is losing officers to these agencies. We found recruitment of law enforcement personnel has become more competitive in the last decade. Municipal and county agency officials indicated it is becoming more difficult to recruit qualified applicants, and these local law enforcement agencies currently have the advantage of a more competitive compensation package than MHP.

While the number of qualified applicants has decreased, municipal and county law enforcement agencies in Montana cite the need for increasing skills and professionalism of municipal officers and deputy sheriffs. These officials supported a need to increase initial qualifications of recruits given the demands of investigations, court case preparation and testimony, narcotics and related hazardous materials requirements, and advances in technology relating to evidence procedures, new crash investigation techniques, and homeland security concerns.

Recommendation #4
We recommend MHP:

A. Revise the current job description for MHP officers to accurately reflect current requirements.

B. Review and revise recruit qualification criteria to encompass the full range of skill sets and increased job complexity.

C. If deemed necessary, request a classification review based on these revisions.

Appendix A

Scope and Methodologies

We examined the organization of MHP, a decentralized operation consisting of seven districts and 25 detachments. Within the districts, we reviewed assignment of officers to shifts to provide highway coverage seven days per week. We also considered procedures allowing officers the flexibility to determine patrol routes for their assigned area of responsibility.

We examined procedures used to collect and compile enforcement data based on a daily log book system designed to record various activity codes and account for each officer's time. Our review included an analysis of the data compiled by individual officers.

We reviewed Montana law, Title 61 (Motor Vehicles), regarding MHP responsibilities relative to highway safety, and Title 44, Chapter 1, (Highway Patrol) to identify the role of MHP. In addition, we reviewed the established MHP mission statement, goals, and objectives by discussing the intent of the law and how it relates to the mission statement with MHP management.

We interviewed all seven district captains, 17 of 25 detachment sergeants, and 32 patrol officers during the audit. As part of the interview process, we reviewed shift schedules to identify staffing patterns and the number of officers and supervisors available for duty around the clock. We also compiled data reflecting district, detachment, and individual officer areas of responsibility. In addition, we observed patrol activities and verified area coverage by riding with officers selected from all seven districts.

We selected a sample of 32 officer daily activity logs for the months of November 2002, January 2003, and June 2003 to examine activity report information and to compare patrol and non-patrol activities. We also examined the daily logs to identify the extent of activities such as crash response and investigation, assistance to local law enforcement and to the public, DUI and jail processing, and the serving of warrants.

We examined the following patrol-related activities:

- Warrant management related to court-issued warrants for traffic offenses resulting from citations issued by MHP.
- Preparation of court case documentation and officer coordination with county attorneys.
- Use of bond schedules and bond collection by MHP officers for traffic tickets.

We interviewed MHP training officials, and examined records to review training requirements and accomplishments, to identify the types of training, the amount of time spent receiving training, time spent instructing, and the overall impact of training on patrol duties.

We examined MHP central office and district budget/expenditure information to identify funding priorities, including equipment/vehicles, the use of overtime, and incarceration costs for individuals arrested by MHP officers and/or sentenced by a presiding judge for traffic-related offenses. We interviewed sergeants and officers to identify types of equipment required and used, and equipment effectiveness.

We interviewed MHP officials to assess the impact of officer turnover (retirements, transfers, and resignations). In addition, we discussed recruitment effectiveness and the impact of assignment locations, work activities, and pay and benefits on recruitment and officer retention.

We compared data from the Montana Accident Record System (MARS) to information compiled by the MHP from daily activity logs to assess correlations between MHP patrol activities and crashes occurring on Montana highways. We also reviewed data from MARS to compile statistics reflecting the numbers of crashes, extent of injuries, deaths, or property damage, types of vehicles (automobiles, trucks, commercial, motorcycles, etc), crash timing, and locations of crashes.

We conducted a search for national studies and other state's assessments evaluating the relationship between fine/fee levels and traffic control such as the impact on crash/fatality rates from speed limit and seat belt law compliance monitoring by law enforcement.

We contacted a sample of county sheriffs and municipal police department chiefs to discuss communication and coordination with the MHP, and to discuss salary differences among state and local agencies.

Data Limitations

We used information from the MHP Monthly Activity Reporting System for our examination of field operations. During the course of the audit, we identified specific concerns related to inconsistent use of the data codes by officers. In Chapter III, we provide more detail about our concerns regarding the reliability and accuracy of the data compiled using this system. We completed audit work using the data because it is the only information available. However, we recognize there are limitations to the use of this data because of accuracy concerns. In addition, we used data from the MARS system for assessment of operations. While we did not identify concerns during the audit, we did not test MARS data for reliability and/or accuracy.

Consideration for Future Audit Work

We identified three topics outside the scope of the MHP audit warranting potential consideration by the Legislative Audit Committee for future performance audit work:

- **Bond Schedules And Revenue Generation**. Multiple bond schedules exist at the local level. Bond is an amount of money required by courts to assure a violator will appear in court when required. If the violator fails to appear, the bond amount is intended to cover the fines/fees established in the law. Biennially, Montana Supreme Court staff develop a state bond schedule with assistance from state agencies with law enforcement responsibilities. However, Montana law allows individual city and justice courts to establish bond amounts in lieu of using the state schedule. This allows courts to place a higher priority on violations more important to local constituents. We noted the difference in the amount of bond required in one county could be three to four times the amount required in another county for the same violation. The following

table provides some examples of differences specifically identified by MHP.

Table 8

Bond Schedule Amounts
(selected sample)

Statute	Violation	MHP Code Book	Deer Lodge County	Rosebud County	McCone County	Custer County
61-3-342(1)	Temp window sticker	$45	$50	$120	$135	$85
61-5-102(1)	Expired DL <180 days	$45	$50	$120	$135	$85
61-6-151(2)	Suspend/revoke license	$270	$270	$520	$535	$300
61-7-103(1)	Remain scene, injury	$520	None*	$520	$535	$535
61-8-301(1a)	Reckless driving	$170	None*	$170	$335	$185
61-8-326(1)	Improper pass	$70	$70	$120	$135	$85
61-8-401(1a)	DUI, 1st offense	$375	$395	$1,000	$660	$560
61-9-203(1)	Defective headlamp	$50	$50	$120	$135	$85
61-9-405(2b)	Defective windshield	$50	$50	$120	$135	$120

* Required court appearance

Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division from MHP input on various bond schedules.

Bond schedule variations result in different revenue received by individual counties for the same offense. Audit work in this area would require contacting individual courts because the data system used by the courts, while standardized between courts, is not centralized. A performance audit could identify the extent of differing bond amounts and evaluate the impact of different bond schedules on law enforcement, the courts, and the public, as well as the related impact on revenue generation.

- **Jail incarceration costs and daily rate determination**. State agencies such as the Department of Corrections, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the MHP use county jail facilities to incarcerate violators of Montana laws falling under the jurisdiction of their agency. When MHP uses a local jail, it agrees to pay a daily rate negotiated in advance. Counties establish these rates to help cover their jail operations costs. The fiscal year 2004 list of county jail confinement rates shows a

costs for MHP when they sentence violators to jail following appearance for a traffic violation. For fiscal year 2003, MHP expended over $1.3 million for incarceration. Approximately 72 percent of these incarcerations were based on a court decision rather than an MHP officer traffic stop arrest. According to MHP officials, as a result of previous budget limitations, officers are directed to be aware of the agency's incarceration budget status when making a decision whether to arrest an offender or persons with an outstanding warrant.

The Department of Corrections is responsible for negotiating state agency daily jail rates. State law requires the Department of Corrections to reimburse counties for reasonable cost, but does not define the term reasonable cost. The law does not address use of jails or reimbursement rates for other state agencies. Performance audit work in this area could include the following:

- Assessing state agency budget impacts of jail use and jail use decisions
- Determining impacts of court decisions to jail offenders
- Reviewing factors used by cities and counties to determine jail operating costs and to establish daily rates

- **Review of Montana Law Enforcement Academy (MLEA) and MHP Recruit Academy Operations**. The MHP Recruit Academy annually trains between 10 and 20 applicants for MHP officer positions. The MHP Recruit Academy is a 24-week training program. In contrast, the Montana Law Enforcement Academy (MLEA) annually offers "Basic" entry-level certification training classes for new or prospective employees of the state's police departments and sheriff's offices. The MLEA Basic class typically has an average of 35 class members at the beginning of the training program. The Basic Class is a 12 week training program. Upon completion of the training programs, graduates of both academies must obtain on-the-job experience of one year to obtain a Basic Law Enforcement certification.

  During the course of our MHP performance audit, we did a preliminary examination of the Academies' operations and course contents. While the MHP Recruit Academy has specialty courses directly related to the day-to-day responsibilities of the Patrol, many of the courses are similar to MLEA classes, and in

Patrol, many of the courses are similar to MLEA classes, and in some cases taught by MLEA instructors. However, based on interviews with the Administrators of the respective Academies, there are also distinct philosophical and practical differences in their training approaches because of participants and the intended outcomes.

The MHP Recruit Academy is by policy, more "boot camp"-oriented than the MLEA. MHP management and officers believe this philosophy is critical to instilling discipline with regard to policy/procedure compliance for officers who receive limited direct supervision and for enforcing the need to have unwavering adherence to supervisory direction when it is provided. For example, an MLEA graduate, whether they have law enforcement experience or not, cannot by policy be accepted into the MHP until they apply for and complete the MHP Recruit Academy. While part of the reason for this is due to the specialty classes taught at the MHP Recruit Academy, part of it is also (reportedly) to instill an appropriate attitude and philosophy into the recruit.

Although the MLEA is reported to have a less intensive training approach because they serve a wide variety of law enforcement agencies, some of the boot camp philosophy is still employed. Additionally, the MLEA is responsible for teaching a wider variety of training classes to individuals who have responsibilities that are differently emphasized than MHP officers. For example, MLEA Basic graduates receive training in how to approach domestic disputes, whereas while MHP officers could become involved in domestic disputes during a traffic stop or as backup to a local law enforcement agency, there is limited or no training in this area during the Recruit Academy.

One additional issue that would appear to affect both training organizations has to do with provision of in-service training upon completion of the respective Academy. Both agencies offer/provide specialty training to local law enforcement agencies at their request because the MLEA Basic curriculum is sometimes not able to offer all of the training that Sheriffs and/or Police Chiefs believe is needed for their law enforcement personnel. Interviews suggest there are several reasons for this additional training, ranging from lack of accredited instructors, to budget issues, to available training time during the Basic timeframe. Despite the reasons, there are distinct impacts on the MHP because they often (at the request of local law enforcement) provide essentially free training to those agencies

According to MHP and other Department of Justice officials there has been informal consideration given to examining the potential duplication of training classes and determining the feasibility of consolidating all or part of the Academies. Due to the interrelationship between the two operations, it is difficult to fully evaluate the MHP Recruit Academy without also examining a portion of, or all of the MLEA operations. The reasons range from the need for comparative information and the necessity of the MHP to have access to at least an annual employee development component. Due to the interrelationship we believe a separate examination (performance audit) should be conducted with regard to the MHP Recruit Academy and the MLEA Basic course. This performance audit would review all aspects of the MHP Recruit Academy and MLEA operations, as well as the provision of training to local law enforcement agencies by all Department of Justice personnel.

Appendix B

Mon. 05/17/2004

MONTANA HIGHWAY PATROL
MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT - Statewide Total
For Jan, 2003 thru Dec, 2003

HAZARDOUS VIOLATIONS	100	WARNINGS	CITATIONS
Negligent Homicide	101	------	13
D.U.I.	104	------	2213
Per Se	105	------	99
Reckless Driving	106	------	403
Careless Driving	107	------	1974
Speed - Truck	109	526	1883
Truck Speed E000	110	0	1
Speed - Over Legal	111	24003	37113
Speed - Basic Rule	112	697	712
Speed E000	113	0	0
Right-of-Way	115	706	501
Following too Closely	120	343	248
Driving Over Centerline	125	409	57
Improper Lane Travel	126	929	193
Driving on Shoulder	127	35	1
Crossing Divider or Barrier	128	105	112
Improper Passing	130	666	526
Fail to or Improper Signal	135	510	33
Improper Turning	140	227	117
Fail to Stop - Sign or Light	145	1658	732
Restrictive Sign	146	75	71
Hit and Run	150	109	398
Fail to Dim Head Lamps	155	375	48
Light Violations	160	10523	291
Defective Brakes	166	388	47
Other Defective Equipment	168	6179	251
Parking	170	1109	45
Pedestrian	175	78	5
Bicycle	180	43	20
Seat Belt	182	2762	14590
Child Restraint	183	187	359
Other Hazardous	190	887	651
TOTAL	195	54211	63709

NON-HAZARDOUS VIOLATIONS	200	WARNINGS	CITATIONS
Driver's License	202	11968	1799
License Suspended/Revoked	204	------	2344
Vehicle License	206	14934	2701
One Vehicle License	207	4619	68
Vehicle License/Out-of-State	208	353	72
Throwing Debris on Highway	210	42	53
Throwing Lighted Material	212	83	36
Over Legal or Tolerance	214	7	5
Over Axle	216	0	2
Over Tires	218	11	1
Over License Capacity	220	31	4
No Valid G.V.W.	222	15	6
Over Length	224	16	6
Over Width	226	57	11
Over Height	228	4	6
Fuel Permit	230	3	3
Defective Exhaust	232	85	5
Excessive Smoke	234	28	0
Log Book	235	956	222
Medical Certificate	236	85	43
Insurance	240	11468	7181
Other Nonhazardous	245	494	136
TOTAL	250	45312	14704

Total Mileage of All Vehicles	4841274
Total Hours on Duty	311335.82
Percent Traffic Patrol	43.82%
Total Hazardous Violations	117920
Total Nonhazardous Violations	60016
Total Other Violations	1951
Enforcement Index	19
Calls for Service	59941

OTHER VIOLATIONS	260	WARNINGS	CITATIONS
Intoxicated Pedestrian	262	------	22
Illegal Possesion - Liquor	265	------	527
Furn. Liquor to Minor	270	------	30
Motor Vehicle Theft	272	------	18
Vehicle Dealer	275	69	28
Aircraft	277	0	0
Wrecker Yard	280	3	2
Drugs	282	------	536
Other	296	231	436
TOTAL	298	352	1599

Spec. Enforcement Actions	300	WARNINGS	CITATIONS
Radar	301	23967	38149
Aircraft	302	60	136
Safety Spot Check	303	198	10
T.A.R.P.	304	352	216
Other	305	7578	4600

TOTAL ACTIVITY DATA	310	NUMBER
Arrest Tickets	312	80012
Warning Tickets	313	99875
Violators Stopped	314	93510
Property Damage Accident Inv.	325	7755
Injury Accident Inv.	326	3080
Fatality Accident Inv.	327	205
Blood Run	328	47
Rabies Run	329	2
Hit/Run Investigations P.D.	330	443
Hit/Run Investigations Inj.	331	122
Hit/Run Investigations Fatal	332	51

D.U.I. DATA	350	NUMBER
Breath	351	1319
Blood	352	413
Urine	353	1
Refused Chemical Test	354	525
D.U.I. Charges with Test	355	1659
D.U.I. Charges without test	357	554

Statewide Total
For Jan, 2003 thru Dec, 2003

HOURLY ACTIVITIES

		HOURS	OVERTIME	NUMBER
Patrol Traffic - State Hwys	1	118070.97	522.90	------
Patrol Traffic - County Roads	2	3394.10	23.50	------
Patrol - Stationary Radar	3	2214.55	5.00	------
Other Special Enforcement	4	8371.28	6221.15	------
Total Miles All Vehicles	5	------	------	4841274
Equipment Repair	6	8515.48	87.70	------
Accident Traffic	9	39575.95	6001.70	11040
Accident Other	10	33.55	6.50	30
First Aid	11	70.00	1.00	98
Stolen Veh. Recov. Unoccupied	13	41.00	3.50	44
Stolen Veh. Recov. Occupied	14	48.50	17.25	38
Pursuits Apprehended	15	50.75	14.50	46
Pursuits Not Apprehended	16	85.25	4.80	15
Distance Pursued	17	------	------	235
Report Writing	20	16671.72	157.00	22455
Arrest Processing	21	4300.10	1146.55	3061
Case Preparation	22	9296.35	300.20	8102
Court Appearance	23	5031.05	681.95	6102
Civil Follow-up	24	192.80	7.50	176
Warrants Served	25	1572.70	81.35	2579
Driver License Pick-up	26	17.30	2.00	42
Investigations - Criminal	27	877.25	123.10	677
S.I.N. Searches	28	250.70	48.75	281
Investigations - Traffic	29	7047.27	329.80	10459
Interviews	30	374.25	18.75	411
Vehicles Impounded/Stored	33	321.15	6.75	683
Emergencies	34	185.65	32.25	135
Instruction Given M.H.P.	36	4433.50	190.00	1347
Instruction Given Other	37	1132.60	87.75	292
Training Received	38	20255.25	582.80	3611
Office and Radio	39	1273.15	0.00	------
Supervision	40	6228.65	177.25	1862
Administration	41	20035.40	282.95	------
Meetings	42	9997.45	313.20	4656
Inspections - School Bus	44	1117.15	6.50	4385
Inspections - Other	45	931.20	0.70	1943
Terminal Inspections	46	24.25	0.00	25
Transportation - Prisoner	49	830.90	53.35	664
Assist Police Department	50	1217.95	96.95	1581
Assist Sheriff's Office	51	3121.40	272.65	3322
Assist Public	52	5750.60	189.05	12733
Assist Dept. of Highways	53	502.35	12.75	1084
Assist F.W.P.	54	107.90	10.50	156
Assist Other Gvt. Agency	55	2816.15	757.95	1436
G.V.W. Activity	58	6.00	0.00	8
P.S.C. Activity	59	0.00	0.00	0
Scale House	60	81.00	0.00	------
Safety Education	61	1030.10	348.80	481
Safety Education Talks	62	537.80	109.50	447
Manual Control (dir. traffic)	63	480.95	61.50	325
Gallons of Gas Transferred	64	------	------	0

		HOURS	OVERTIME	NUMBER
Truck Inspection Activities:				
Total L1/L4 Truck Inspections	66	1353.50	4.75	1587
Total L2/L3 Truck Inspections	67	1445.95	30.05	2823
OOS Vehicles L1/L4	68	------	------	124
OOS Drivers L1/L4	69	------	------	19
OOS Vehicles L2/L3	70	------	------	57
OOS Drivers L2/L3	71	------	------	128
Educational Reviews (Total)	72	0.00	0.00	0
Educational Reviews (H/M)	73	0.00	0.00	0
Compliance Reviews (Total)	74	0.00	0.00	0
Compliance Reviews (H/M)	75	0.00	0.00	0
MCSAP off Hours	76	0.00	0.00	------
TOTAL OF ALL HOURS WORKED	80	311335.82	19434.40	------
Number of Days Worked	81	------	------	36487
Number of Days Off	82	------	------	24478
Comp time Earned	83	142.25	------	------
Overtime Hrs. Earned	84	19292.15	------	------
Comp Time Used	85	1841.65	------	------
Annual Leave	86	32798.55	------	------
Sick Leave	87	10049.95	------	------
Emergency Sick Leave	88	235.50	------	------
Military Leave	89	5032.00	------	------
Other Leave	90	7002.00	------	------

Agency Response

ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF MONTANA

Mike McGrath
Attorney General

Department of Justice
215 North Sanders
PO Box 201401
Helena, MT 59620-1401

June 7, 2004

RECEIVED
JUN 0 7 2004
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIV.

Mr. Mike Wingard
Legislative Audit Division
Room 160, Capitol
Helena MT 59620

Dear Mr. Wingard:

Enclosed please find the requested responses to the recommendations from the recent performance audit conducted by your office for the Montana Highway Patrol Division of the Department of Justice. I have followed the progress of the audit closely and am pleased by the results.

As you are well aware, the Patrol Division is the largest in the Department of Justice. The recommendations you and your associates have made will affect a great number of employees, both officer and civilian staff. Some of these recommendations will be implemented immediately, others will take more time and review. Eventually, when the recommendations become reality, improved operations will allow the Division to produce better service to the citizens and motoring public of Montana.

I want to personally thank you and your staff for undertaking this project. The review has been a positive experience for the Division. I look forward to the presentation of the results to the Legislative Audit Committee on June 22, 2004. Again, thank you for your efforts.

Very truly yours,

MIKE McGRATH
Attorney General

Attachment

Encl: Colonel Randy Yaeger, Chief Administrator, Highway Patrol Division

TELEPHONE: (406) 444-2026 FAX: (406) 444-3549 E-MAIL: contactdoj@state.mt.us

Following are the responses of the Department of Justice to the recommendations contained in your June 2004 performance audit of the Montana Highway Patrol:

Recommendation #1:

We recommend MHP:

A. Prioritize patrol and non-patrol activities.
B. Focus MHP patrol officer resources on high-risk, non-discretionary, and discretionary activities.
C. Identify alternatives for low-risk, discretionary activities.

The department concurs. We will begin implementation of the recommendations dependent on fiscal and other restraints that may need to be addressed.

Recommendation #2:

We recommend MHP:

A. Identify data needed to better measure the effectiveness of MHP operations.
B. Determine proper collection/compilation methodologies and integrate these into new technologies.
C. Analyze and report operational effectiveness and status.

The department concurs. Business process changes need to be considered before the technology supporting those changes is implemented. We will begin the planning process to complete these changes.

Recommendation #3:

We recommend MHP:

A. Establish a pilot project to increase the on-the-road presence of selected sergeants and assess the impacts of eliminating or reducing sergeants' current administrative workload.
B. Establish on-the-road patrol performance goals for sergeants, including patrol time, crash investigations, officer observations, and traffic enforcement stops.
C. Decrease administrative requirements for all sergeants by identifying alternatives such as eliminating office-based administrative requirements, utilizing contracts (including retired MHP officers), and/or establishing criteria to justify part-time administrative support positions.

The department concurs. We anticipate beginning the pilot project in January 2005. Performance goals for sergeants will be established and data collection

practices will be reviewed along with determining if other resources are available to handle administrative duties.

Recommendation #4:

We recommend MHP:

A. Revise the job description for MHP officers to accurately reflect current requirements.
B. Review and revise recruit qualification criteria to encompass the full range of skill sets and increased job complexity.
C. If deemed necessary, request a classification review based on these revisions.

The department concurs.